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**THE EFFECT OF *METANOLA*, A FORTY-DAY SEASON OF PRAYER, ON
HEART ATTITUDES OF MURRAY HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of
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Doctor of Ministry

By
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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF *METANOIA*, A FORTY-DAY SEASON OF PRAYER, ON HEART

ATTITUDES OF MURRAY HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

by

Guy R. Brewer

Church health is the byword for congregational leadership in the twenty-first century. The majority of research on church health has focused on the horizontal or human dynamics of health in the church. Many studies have examined interpersonal communication, church culture, leadership competence, and other factors in the human community that impact church health. Even so, the body of research has remained virtually silent on the role of prayer in church health. This study engaged the congregation of Murray Hill United Methodist Church in a forty-day season of prayer, *Metanoia*, in order to explore the degree to which focused prayer enhanced the health of the congregation in terms of upward, inward, and outward directed heart attitudes.

This inquiry employed a quasi-experimental design in which intact groups and individual members of Murray Hill United Methodist Church participated in a host of prayer initiatives intended to deepen the life of prayer within the on-going life of the church. *Metanoia* examined fifteen heart attitudes that grow out of the life of prayer as they related to church health. The study employed a researcher-designed instrument, The Church Heart Exam, administered in a pre-test/post-test design to measure shifts in heart attitudes. A systematic sample of 102 church members served the experimental group. 100 members of Saint Luke United Methodist Church in Lexington, Kentucky served as a non-treatment control group. The research question addressed in this study was:

What impact, if any, did a forty-day season of prayer conducted in the context of intact groups have on congregational heart attitudes of Murray Hill United Methodist Church as measured by the Church Heart Exam?

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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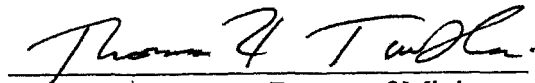
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CHAPTER 1

Understanding the Problem

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Mark 11:17

As a Roman Catholic youth, my earliest training in prayer emphasized Jesus' teaching of the Lord's Prayer with no mention of the promises of God. I prayed the "Our Father" countless times as a prescribed penance for my sins. I emerged from my youth understanding prayer as a joyless duty at best and a punishment at worst.

Even as an adult member of the United Methodist Church, my understanding of prayer did not shift very much. I cannot recall hearing a single message on the subject of prayer in ten years of attendance at United Methodist churches. My seminary experience proved no better in teaching me to pray. The seminary I attended did not offer any courses on prayer. In fairness to the seminary, my estimation of the importance of prayer was so low that I would not have taken a course on prayer if the option had existed.

After nine years of service as a pastor in which prayer was a part of my work but not a priority in my life, I found myself exhausted and burned out. I had reached the end of my rope as a pastor trapped in activist, self-reliant ministry. The final straw in this process came in the process of founding a new church.

When I arrived in Port Charlotte, Florida in 1990 to develop a new United Methodist church, the Florida Annual Conference had already invested significant resources in this new church start. Twenty years earlier, the Sarasota district had purchased five acres of land on which to build a church when the time was right. Through the efforts of the district superintendent, a generous layman had donated land for a

parsonage and an architect had begun drawing plans for this dwelling. The largest membership United Methodist church in the area, Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, had pledged to support this new church start as an extension of their ministry with three years of financial backing. The pastor of Port Charlotte United Methodist Church had recruited a group of lay missionaries, about a dozen people, who saw the new church as their mission and agreed to form a core group to support the founding pastor.

When I arrived on the scene, the district superintendent gave me a manual on new church development produced by the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship. I read this manual and found it to be a helpful how-to book that was full of practical suggestions, timelines, and suggested strategies for starting a new church. The Sarasota district also underwrote the cost of attendance at two seminars on new church development sponsored by the United Methodist Church. Again, this training focused sharply on the strategic activities involved in starting a new church.

Unfortunately, this prayerless approach to new church development also fed into my pre-existing pattern of activist ministry. For all of the generous support and careful preparation that undergirded this effort, prayer preparation received little attention. I joined the superintendent and other leaders in treating prayer as a secondary activity to the core process. When I asked the superintendent how to begin gathering people, he suggested I knock on doors and have ice cream parties in my home. The first of many gatherings of the core missionaries began with perfunctory prayer, but were primarily brainstorming strategy sessions in which we explored our ideas and fears more than sought the will of God. When we did begin to pray in this newly forming community, we limited our prayer initiative to a fifteen-minute prayer meeting at the building site on Wednesdays. Dozens of people generously supported the new church with monetary gifts

and sacrificial service. Even so, we did not ask people to become prayer partners or to serve as intercessors.

Over the course of three years I worked day and night to build the congregation and physical facility that became Edgewater United Methodist Church. Although I devoted virtually no time to prayer, I averaged eighty hours per week in committee meetings, visitation, sermon preparation, and the work of the ministry. By the end of those three years, Edgewater United Methodist Church was a success according to the standards of the annual conference. We had gathered a congregation of 200 plus persons and completed construction of a church building and a parsonage. Under the veneer of performance standards, this fledgling congregation was exhausted, under-nourished, and fearful with a worn-out, depressed pastor. Edgewater United Methodist Church appeared to be a success but lacked the marks of congregational health such as joy, unity, patience, and enthusiasm. We relied on ourselves and achieved exactly what we set out to do. We built a church under our own power.

After three and a half years of this self-reliant pattern of ministry, I left Edgewater United Methodist Church desperate for a rest. I accepted an appointment as director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Miami with the hope that campus ministry would be different, if not easier, than starting a new church. Instead, I found a ministry at the Wesley Foundation that was sick unto death. The ministry had sustained years of neglectful leadership and stood on the verge of closing. No more than a dozen students were involved. However, I was not aware that this handful of students had been interceding for the Wesley Foundation.

Beginning in the spring of 1992, six students began meeting weekly on their own initiative to pray that God would move. About the same time, the Board of Higher

Education and Campus Ministry had completed an in-depth review of the ministry that recommended continuing the ministry despite a strong push among many conference leaders to close it. In the midst of this prayerful process, the incumbent director precipitously left. In August 1992, Hurricane Andrew struck South Florida, including the University of Miami, disrupting all of the plans these students had made for outreach to new students. Despite these setbacks, the students kept praying for a revival.

I came to the Wesley Foundation in October 1993 after the school year had started. On the surface, my coming to this ministry seemed to be anything but an answer to prayer. I was worn out and possessed little vision for campus ministry. This was my first experience in ministry to students and I had no idea where to begin. October is probably the worst possible time to come as a new campus minister. By this time of year all of the new student orientation has run its course and students have settled into routines. Recruiting new students to the ministry at this time of year was a virtual impossibility. In my mind, I was leading a ministry that was doomed to failure.

When I came to campus ministry, I did not object to praying, but I felt pressure to attend to details of urgent importance such as fund raising and program needs. In my activist focus, I did not understand the linkage between prayer and leadership.

Over the next six years, prayer served as an avenue for the work of the Holy Spirit at Wesley Foundation in ways too numerous to recount in the context of this dissertation. The overall product of prayer was the resurrection of a ministry considered dead by most.

Prayer worked at Wesley Foundation in the form of a gentle, steadily unfolding discovery of God's will. As I met with students and board members to pray, I noticed subtle shifts occurring in my spirit. I felt less anxious about the future even though it was no more certain than ever. A shift in my priorities happened over a period of months. I

had always cared about people and sought to be sensitive to their needs, but in truth, activity in the form of programs, ministries, and day-to-day work remained the centerpiece of ministry for me. My assumption in ministry was that hard work equaled success. If one wanted to be more successful, one must work harder. Through this season of prayer, I began to admit my codependent, workaholic attitudes. My view of people also came under the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit. I saw my tendency to treat others as resources for ministry rather than brothers and sisters in Christ. As God worked on my heart, I began to feel less fear and less of a need to control those around me.

Perhaps the most important insight God provided in these months of prayer came one Thursday evening when a board member, Richard, arrived at our prayer meeting with a simple diagram he had discovered in the writings of Theophane the Recluse, a fourth century Syrian hermit. The diagram resembled a spoked wheel. Richard explained that the spoked wheel illustrates the movement of the Christian life. As we draw closer to God at the hub or center of life, we draw closer to one another (Ware 41). This illustration became an epiphany in which God revealed to me that ministry is relational, emanating from God at the center of our lives. Out of this experience I began to pray for a broken heart for others, especially lost people.

My interest in the connection between prayer and church health has been fueled in large part by the answers to prayer that have come since I began to integrate prayer into my own leadership. As I prayed for broken heartedness, students began to come forward seeking baptism. Each semester at least one student felt moved to begin a new prayer ministry. Still, I sensed that God wanted to do much more than we were doing.

Over six years I invested significant effort in designing programs and training students to evangelize other students. For all of our efforts, evangelism remained a

program with little enthusiasm or ownership on the part of students. In the spring of 1998, I was praying about my frustration with the lack of results in evangelism when I sensed an inner witness from God. In my spirit I heard God say, "You don't give a damn that they are damned." In essence, I felt God saying that our efforts at evangelism had been just that, efforts at evangelism, not heartfelt compassion for lost people. The next day I shared this with students and God began a process of conviction and change of heart. In the fall of 1998, students initiated a campus outreach in which they canvassed the campus on Wednesdays and Fridays to share the gospel with lost people. Over a six-week period, seven persons gave their lives to Christ through this initiative. Prayer created a heart for evangelism that skill-based training had failed to produce.

Prayer and Change of Heart

"Deep calls to deep." Psalm 42:7

The kind of change of heart that God worked through prayer at the Wesley Foundation in Miami is the seed of revival for ministry in every place. In coming to a new pastoral appointment in June 1999, my burning desire was that the people of Murray Hill United Methodist Church might experience a change of heart that produces anointed ministry. The immediate pressure on me as the new pastor was to do something to reverse twenty-five years of declining membership and attendance. To the contrary, the leading of the Holy Spirit was to pray, and specifically, to engage in an extended season of prayer to create a space for God to touch our hearts. As Wills poignantly states, the first task of spiritual leadership is to stop praying that God will bless what we are doing and to start praying that God might help us to be a part of what God is blessing (48).

Does a focused period of prayer produce, enhance, or strengthen heart attitudes through which the Holy Spirit works? Jesus believed this to be true. Before he began his

public ministry, Jesus retreated to the desert for forty days to fast and pray. According to Luke, Jesus “returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” following this season of prayer (Luke 4:14). When Jesus began preaching, he called the people to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17). This call to repentance or *metanoia* is a call to “change of heart” that comes through one’s personal encounter with God. The consistent example of Jesus pointed to prayer as the primary means through which we take part in what God is blessing.

The Challenge to Learn to Pray

Jesus lived in continuous unity with God. At every major turning point of his life Jesus withdrew to pray for guidance and strength. He spent his last night on earth in prayer for his disciples and submitting his will to the Father. The summary description of Jesus' life and ministry comes in the statement, “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30).

Those who knew Jesus the best, the twelve disciples, witnessed miracles such as the feeding of five thousand, the calming of stormy seas, exorcisms, and a multiplicity of healings. They heard Jesus preach soul-stirring sermons that transformed lives. To their credit, these disciples perceived that prayer was the source of power in Jesus' life. They did not ask for a “how to” course in spiritual works. Instead, they wanted to know the secret of Jesus' prayer life that undergirded the powerful person they knew. This original group of disciples discerned that transformative power sprang from Jesus' prayer life.

Life transforming ministry is the goal of every sincere pastor. The possibility of touching and changing lives drives many pastors to work long hours for little pay in unpleasant circumstances. Yet, the irony of Christian ministry is that none of us has the power to transform any life, including our own, without the power of the Holy Spirit. A vital, abiding relationship with God is the necessary condition of fruitfulness in ministry

and prayer is the exercise of that abiding relationship. "If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Leadership through prayer is the historic distinctive of Christian leadership. The biblical model for pastors as prayerful leaders of the church is summed up in the decision of the twelve apostles to "give (their) attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" when confronted with the need to figure out a system for food distribution in the faith community (Acts 6:4). For many twenty-first century pastors, the reality of the ministry is just the opposite. They feel the demands of the congregation to oversee a myriad of administrative and programmatic details while prayer is taken for granted or treated as a good thing for the pastor to do on his or her own time. The greatest challenge church leaders face today is to learn to pray.

Many United Methodist pastors have attended seminaries that taught competency-based ministry. Seminary curricula address a body of information and a host of competencies for ministry while often neglecting the formation of the minister. As an outgrowth of this type of leadership training, the United Methodist Church has become a denomination that produces the fruit of human competency: a tightly organized institution wound around a core of tradition-based, inwardly directed programs. Without core leadership that believes in prayer and prays as the first step of leadership, the United Methodist Church will not be able to access the power of the Holy Spirit that God has promised.

The book of Acts portrays the early church as a praying church in which the Holy Spirit lived and breathed in every relationship and decision. Ogilvie has observed that a more accurate name of this particular book of the Bible might be the "Acts of the Holy Spirit" (16). Time and again, prayer was the window of blessing by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' last instruction to his disciples was to "wait for the gift my Father has promised" (Acts 1:4). Prior to Pentecost, "They all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). The immediate result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was prayer in the Spirit in the form of glossolalia, speaking in languages (Acts 2:4). Luke portrayed the earliest pattern of the Spirit-filled church as devoted to "the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

Many have attempted to replicate the apostolic church in search of the exponential growth and incredible power at work in the post-Pentecost church. For many others, the example of prayer exhibited in the first-century church is little more than a history lesson. Centuries of institutionalization and the encroachment of secular values often push prayer into a forgotten corner in the life of the church.

Praying churches understand the parable of the vine and branches in John 15:5. Through prayer, ministry becomes the expression of the community's life in God. If churches do not rely on prayer as the first movement of ministry, on what is their ministry based? In this regard, Stephen Martyn offers a piercing diagnostic question of the church: "What fuels the engine?" (July 1998 lecture).

Factors that Mitigate against Prayer

If churches do not follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, what are the motivations for doing what they do? In many churches, tradition, an addiction to the familiar, fuels the engine. "We've always done it this way" is more than a statement of resistance to change. For churches without a vital prayer life, memories of better, more vital times are the only foundation on which the leaders can rely. The openness to move fearlessly into an unknown future is a gift of the Spirit. Outside of the life of prayer in which we learn to

rely on God, the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Churches that do not pray not only resist change, they are incapable of it.

Tekyl observed that the fundamental leadership choice of the church is a choice between Christ and crisis (Praying 29). Outside of a vital prayer life, leaders find themselves in a self-perpetuating loop of crisis management in which they expend their energies responding to the latest challenge to the life of the church. Instead of leading with discernment and vision, many sincere Christians are trapped in a pattern of reactive ministry. Stephen Covey labels this reactive pattern of leadership "urgency addiction." Over a period of time, reactive leaders come to need a crisis to motivate them to action. Proactive leadership ceases to be an option (33-39).

Activity for the sake of activity is one of the most common seductions in the church today. Many church leaders believe that if they are busy they are doing the right things. Despite the fact that no Christian leader would describe prayer as a waste of time, activist churches practice such a philosophy. The extreme focus on doing marginalizes the need for waiting on God or resting in the Lord.

Activism ignores the biblical pattern of action that grows out of listening for direction from God. Psalm 46:10 admonished the Israelite community to "Be still and know that I am God" when facing crisis or calamity. The example of Jesus was to wait two days before going to Bethany upon learning that Lazarus was seriously ill (John 11:6). When volume of activity becomes the measure of ministry, matters of interior transformation often go unnoticed and neglected. As Peterson puts it, "Busyness is an illness of the spirit, a rush from one thing to another because there is no ballast of vocational integrity and no confidence in the primacy of grace" (132-133).

. Jesus intended the church to be a community of healing for sick and injured people. "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" (Matthew 9:12). Ironically, some churches choose outright *illness* as the focus of congregational life. When God's healing is not a living reality through prayer, the church can become a back ward of chronically ill people waiting to die. This form of spiritual illness is subtle but deadly. People bring crippling fear and enormous control needs into the life of the church. In such a situation, the church may become more of a leper colony than a hospital. Without the power of God through prayer, ministry to the sick and dying may become little more than compassionate commiseration with their suffering. Instead of making the sick well, churches that do not pray condemn themselves to catching the illnesses they are commissioned to heal.

Empowerment through Prayer

What happens when churches pray? When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, his instructions detailed in Luke 11:9-13 included four promises:

1. "Everyone who asks receives" (vs. 9). God meets needs through prayer.
2. "He who seeks finds" (vs. 9). God gives guidance in prayer.
3. "To him who knocks, the door will be opened" (vs. 9). God will make a way over time, even in situations that seem impossible, through persistent prayer.
4. "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask" (vs. 13). The key to the Spirit-led life is prayer (Larson 193-194).

Reflecting on the parallel text in Matthew 7:7-11, Willard suggested that *request* is at the heart of prayer. As an alternative to manipulation, confrontation, and condemnation of others, prayer provides the way of simply asking for what is needed. Prayer is a way that actually works because it draws people into the Kingdom of God rather than into the

plans and machinations of others. In fact, by asking God for what others and we need, we create the community of prayerful love (216).

Assessing Effectiveness in Ministry

A hinge issue related to prayer and Christian leadership has to do with how one assesses effectiveness in ministry. Is effective ministry, and hence the effective minister, determined by categories of success such as increases in attendance and congregational giving? Warren offered the insight that effective ministry is more a matter of church health than church growth. More precisely, he suggested that growth is the natural by-product of health. Health in the Body of Christ is the primary indicator of the work of the Holy Spirit (Purpose-Driven 6-8).

Church health is a topic of great interest in its own right in Christian leadership circles. A significant body of literature describes and assesses church health from theological, psychological, sociological, and entrepreneurial models. Each of these disciplines offers a unique angle of vision for examining the health of the Body of Christ. All of these approaches contribute to understanding church health and methods for intentionally building healthy congregations. Nonetheless, no human insights or efforts are a substitute for the power of God. Regardless of one's approach to building a healthy church, prayer is the undergirding dynamic that produces vitality.

The Bible portrays the healthy church as a praying church. Acts 4:32 described the vitality of the faith community in terms of prayer: "All the people were one in heart and mind." Prayer is the language of the heart through which we listen to God's heart and develop a common heart for God. This inquiry examined questions of the heart: the deep dispositions, motives, and aspirations that underlie all of the plans and activities of

ministry. More precisely, this study pointed to the power of prayer to effect change in human hearts.

A biblical view of a healthy church focuses primarily upon the heart attitudes of the congregation. Indicators of church health that receive so much attention in the twentieth century such as attendance, membership, and giving are mentioned in the Bible as secondary evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. Instead, the Bible focuses on keeping in step with the Spirit through personal transformation and faithfulness as the measure of church health. This study examined fifteen attitudes of a healthy heart that grow out of the life of prayer and one's vital relationship with God.

The Way of Not Knowing

In other words, the measure of church health is more a matter of whom we know than knowing where we are going. Abiding in Christ is the foundation of spiritual health and visionary leadership. The course of action in Christian leadership is always revealed and the mode of revelation is prayer. As Chambers pointed out, growth in Christ cannot depend on any particular method beyond absolute dependence on Christ. Two distinctive marks of Christian leadership are:

1. The awareness that you do not know what to do outside of the leading God gives in prayer.
2. If you did know what to do, you do not have the personal power to carry it out (50).

This investigation of prayer and church health assumes that a mystery lies at the core of one's relationship with God. "Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great" (1 Timothy 3:16). To become a praying church does not guarantee instant numerical growth or increased giving. This study does not attempt to devise a program of

prayer that will produce numerical or financial success in the church. An enterprise of this sort would come dangerously close to the attitude of Simon Magus who sought to buy the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-24). God is sovereign, but God has given leaders in the church authority to carry on the work of Jesus Christ. This inquiry explores the impact on heart attitudes and church health when the church prays fervently and with a sincere desire for a change of heart.

The Problem

The lack of priority on prayer in the United Methodist Church is masked by rhetoric about prayer. Each time a person joins the United Methodist Church, he or she comes before the congregation and responds to this question: "Will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service?" (United Methodist Hymnal 48). Yet, considerably more is said about prayer than is done about praying in many churches.

As suggested earlier, part of the problem is the nature of training offered to United Methodist pastors. In the broad sweep of learning that comprises seminary education, the spiritual formation of the minister remains largely neglected. Pastors lead the church in the way they are trained with a primary focus upon competency and performance. The unspoken assumption is that prayer is a matter of private devotion and personal responsibility. The model of the pastor in many churches is one of silence on the subject of prayer.

As leaders in the church, pastors face a withering job description. Many pastors labor under the burden of thinking of their ministry as the sum total of their activities. In this mindset, more effectiveness equates to more activity on the part of the pastor. Even pastors trapped in activist patterns of ministry go through the motions of prayer. Every

worship service includes public prayer. Many churches have a mid-week prayer meeting at which the pastor presides. Persons coming for spiritual counsel ask the pastor to pray with them. Most churches have some form of prayer chain for intercessory prayer.

Administrative meetings of the church often begin and end with a prayer. All of these occasions of corporate and leadership prayer are important and valuable in the spiritual life of the congregation and the pastor. The problem arises when the prayer life of the pastor consists almost exclusively of the praying he or she does as part of pastoral work to the exclusion of private devotion. Praying becomes a job. A living relationship with God becomes lost.

The institutionalization of the church's spiritual life is the pharisaic stagnation that Jesus vigorously condemned. In fact, Pharisees are a biblical caricature of upright people who have deceived themselves into believing that their activities and practices have efficacy in their own right. They suffer from severe heart problems. Their hearts have grown cold to God and hard toward their neighbors. The severity of the problem came across in the negative example Jesus made of the Pharisees. The sin of the "hypocrites" is that they pray a lot for the wrong reasons. These misguided leaders prayed in ways that deliberately drew attention to themselves instead of God. Arrogance and self-consciousness characterized the prayer of the Pharisee who thanked God to be different from his fellow human beings (Matthew 6:5, Luke 18:10).

The revitalization of the United Methodist Church depends upon spiritual awakening within congregations. Those who lead this revival will be those who listen to God in prayer. Only the Holy Spirit can effect transformation of the church and prayer is God's chosen way of communicating the Holy Spirit. The future of a denomination that

has been in steady decline for three decades depends on becoming a praying church once again.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the effect of a forty-day season of prayer on the heart attitudes of Murray Hill United Methodist Church. This inquiry focused upon the dynamics of spiritual transformation that underlie the more visible signs of church health. Specifically, the study addressed the three-fold movement of prayer (upward, inward, and outward) and the degree to which corresponding heart attitudes developed as a result of prayer. Each movement of prayer was described in terms of five corresponding heart attitudes, yielding a constellation of fifteen heart attitudes that point to spiritual transformation in praying churches. A researcher-designed instrument, the Church Heart Exam, provided pre-test and post-test measures of perceived heart attitudes.

Statement of Research Question

This study addressed the following research question:

What impact, if any, did a forty-day season of prayer conducted in the context of intact groups have on congregational heart attitudes of Murray Hill United Methodist church as measured by the Church Heart Exam?

Definition of Terms

In speaking about prayer, St. Augustine wrote, "True, whole prayer is nothing but love" (Foster 1). *Prayer* as used in this study referred to a relational communication with God, a connection of the heart of a person to the heart of God. This study was limited to an examination of Christian prayer. The distinctive mark of Christian prayer is prayer in the name of Jesus that relies upon him as the intercessor for those who pray. This

definition does not claim to know the way in which prayer works. Prayer is a mystery. Instead, this inquiry described the perceptions and beliefs of those who pray. Prayer in this study referred to a variety of forms, practices, purposes, and attitudes that are more fully explored in the literature review.

Congregational prayer life referred to the corporate dimensions of prayer in a church. As the Body of Christ, congregational prayer life includes both the prayer life of individual members and corporate prayer practices. However, this study focused on the cumulative effect of prayer in the congregation in terms of the heart attitudes of the Body as a whole. The fifteen heart attitudes of the congregation are corporate dispositions produced by prayer. The study acknowledged that wide variances exist in the prayer lives of individual members and the degree to which each of them possessed these heart attitudes.

Congregational prayer life depends upon a host of theological and biblical beliefs that form the teaching, practice, and expectations of prayer. Specifically, such beliefs might include:

- a. Where and how the pastor learned to pray.
- b. How the pastor teaches the congregation to pray by precept and example.
- c. How the congregation perceives God's promises about prayer.
- d. What the congregation believes about the efficacy of prayer in healing, deliverance, and empowerment of people.
- e. What role prayer plays in evangelism.
- f. How the Holy Spirit works through prayer.
- g. How prayer is connected to *koinonia* in the congregation.

Heart referred to the biblical concept of the most enduring dispositions and inmost core of a person. To borrow a metaphor from information technology, the heart represented the "default settings" in a congregation's life. In the same way that default settings give the user the same font and format for word processing each time the computer is activated, the heart of a person reflexively responds to circumstances without conscious thought. This is the meaning behind Jesus' teaching of the Great Commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your *heart* " (Matthew 12:30).

For purposes of this study, *Heart attitudes referred* to a constellation of fifteen dispositions that characterize the healthy heart of a congregation and develop through the life of prayer:

1. *A pure heart*: "The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all *pure* " (James 3:17).
2. *A broken heart*: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).
3. *A fearless heart*: "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear"
(1 John 4:18).
4. *A present heart*: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things
will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about
tomorrow" (Matthew 6:33, 34).
5. *A wise heart*: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives
generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"
(James 1:5).
6. *A patient heart*: "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . patience" (Galatians 5:22).
7. *A servant's heart*: "I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.

And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32, 33).

8. *A unified heart*: "I pray . . . that all of them may be one" (John 17: 20, 21).

9. *A generous heart*: "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with
you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well"
(1 Thessalonians 2:8).

10. *An evangelist's heart*: "Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into his
harvest field (Matthew 9:38, KJV).

11. *A loving heart*: "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit
whom he has given us" (Romans 5:5).

12. *A faithful heart*: "Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me
an undivided heart" (Psalm 86:11).

13. *A joyful heart*: "Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete"
(John 16:24).

14. *A hungry heart*: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants
for you, O God" (Psalm 42:1).

15. *A peaceful heart*: "In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present
your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all
understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4: 6,7).

Church health referred to the health of the faith community in terms of the prevalence of the fifteen heart attitudes examined in this study. This inquiry acknowledged that health is not an absolute term but refers to degrees of healthiness in the midst of seasons of illness and recovery. For purposes of this study, a healthy church was one in which these heart attitudes predominated a majority of the time. As the default

settings of congregational life, these heart attitudes ensure that a congregation reflexively exhibits the mind of Christ in dealing with crises or conflicts. Moreover, when the congregation does fall into relative degrees of sickness from internal strife or sin, healthy churches seek to care for and restore a healthy heart life.

Metanoia is the transliteration of the Greek word rendered “repentance” in the New Testament. The deeper meaning of *metanoia* suggests a turning or change of mind or purpose in the direction of alignment with the will of God. *Metanoia* is the topic of Jesus’ earliest sermons as recorded in Matthew 4:17, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” The preaching of John the Baptist further suggests that *metanoia* issues in the development of godly qualities, including a change of heart attitudes. “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). In Acts 5:31, Luke points to the gift quality of *metanoia*, referring to repentance as an activity of God in which God draws humans away from sinful lives and toward the godly life (Vine 279-280).

In this study, *Metanoia* referred to the forty-day season of prayer that was the independent variable. *Metanoia* included five prayer emphases intended to deepen the life of prayer within intact groups in the church. A detailed description of *Metanoia* and its component programs appears in Chapter 3.

Season of prayer connoted an intentional period of time, in this case, 40 days, in which the church concentrates on prayer. Several factors characterized the season of prayer:

- a. As a **season**, this prayer emphasis had a distinct beginning and end, marked by appropriate rites of initiation and closure.
- b. This initiative was a **strategic**, intentional effort to incorporate prayer in as many aspects of congregational life as is feasible.

- c. *Metanoia* was a **soaking** in prayer intended to give as many church members as possible an immersion experience in the life of prayer.
- d. *Metanoia* was a **synergistic** initiative designed to offer many levels of involvement and enhancement of prayer life within intact groups.
- e. *Metanoia* was a **Spirit-led** season of prayer in which a balance between structure and room for the Holy Spirit was sought.

To make room for the Holy Spirit, *Metanoia* employed a forty-day time period in line with biblical models. When Moses went to Mount Sinai to receive the law, he remained on the mountain forty days in prayer (Exodus 24:18). Before Jesus began his public ministry, "the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days (Mark 1:12). After his resurrection, Jesus taught the disciples about the kingdom of God for forty days (Acts 1:3).

Methodology

As a quasi-experimental study, this inquiry introduced an experimental variable in the form of a forty-day season of prayer into intact groups of the Murray Hill United Methodist Church. Rather than focusing on a single small group of participants within the congregation, this study was designed to encourage a sharper focus and greater attention to prayer within existing groups and in the devotional lives of church members. *Metanoia* was publicized through the church newsletter, worship bulletins, pulpit announcements, and special mailings to maximize congregational awareness and participation in a plethora of prayer opportunities. This study employed a pretest-posttest, nonequivalent control group design.

Population and Subjects

The population for this study included all confirmed members of Murray Hill United Methodist Church. 509 persons ranging in age from 12 years to 99 years comprised the total population. In terms of ethnicity and socio-economic background, the population consisted of ninety-nine percent Caucasian, native English speaking persons.

From this population an experimental group of 104 subjects was systematically selected from the church membership rolls. The selection process was a simple numerical process in which every fifth name on the roll was entered in the subject pool. No adjustment was made in the sampling process for age of the person or degree of active involvement in the church.

The control group population included adult members of St. Luke United Methodist Church in Lexington, Kentucky who are active participants in G.R.O.W., a Wednesday night discipleship ministry. St. Luke is a predominantly white congregation of 1,500 persons that includes a representation of all age groups. Adult G.R.O.W. participants were requested by pulpit announcement and a letter from the pastor to complete the Church Heart Exam as part of this study. A sample of 100 persons comprised the control group. More detailed descriptions of the population and samples are found in Chapters 3 and 4.

Context of the Study

Murray Hill United Methodist Church in Jacksonville, Florida is a 503-member congregation established in 1926. The current congregation is the product of a 1990 merger with Wesley United Methodist Church. Murray Hill is located on the west side of Jacksonville in the historic community of Murray Hill. The surrounding area is a densely populated middle-class to lower middle-class community with 15,000 households within

the 32205 zip code. A five-mile radius of the church includes 80,000 households. Murray Hill is forty-eight percent white, forty-five percent African-American, and seven percent other ethnicities. The average age of community residents is thirty-four. Recent demographic studies conducted by the Jacksonville District of the United Methodist Church characterized the area as “highly diverse and transitional.”

Murray Hill United Methodist church is a predominantly white, native English-speaking congregation with all age groups represented. Although there is a significant cadre of younger families, the dominant group in the church is 55+ years. The mean age of the congregation is sixty-two.

Variables

Metanoia, the forty-day season of prayer, was the independent variable in this study. The dependent variable was the constellation of fifteen heart attitudes measured by the Church Heart Exam. Extraneous variables included distractions and communication problems that arose from the use of intact groups in the study.

Instrumentation

The Church Heart Exam is a researcher-designed, sixty item scale designed to measure perceptions of fifteen heart attitudes. The test was constructed with three subscales: upward, inward, and outward. Each subscale included five heart attitudes with four questions related to each heart attitude. A five-point Likert scale was used as the scoring grid. A copy of the Church Heart Exam is found in Appendix A.

The Involvement Questionnaire is a researcher-designed, ten-item scale that measured the degree of involvement of experimental subjects in the programs and activities of *Metanoia*. The purpose of the Involvement Questionnaire was to provide

data for correlating degree of involvement with Church Heart Exam scores. A copy of the Involvement Questionnaire is found in Appendix B.

Data Collection

All data was collected in two mailings to the experimental and control groups. These mailings were done simultaneously, approximately one week before and one week after the forty-day project. Pretest and posttest questionnaires were sort and matched by respondent. Only subjects who completed both pretest and posttest questionnaires were included in the data pool. Data were compiled on MicroSoft Excel spreadsheets for statistical analysis purposes. The process of data collection is detailed in Chapters 3 and 4.

Delimitations and Generalizability

This study was limited to members of Murray Hill United Methodist Church. Every effort was made to include the entire congregation in the project. Intact groups were used to include more people and to ensure a maximum impact on the congregation through *Metanoia*. The assumption was that research data drawn from a random sample of church members would be a valid representation of the congregation as a whole.

Nothing about the methodology or design of this study should hamper generalizability to other United Methodist congregations or Christian churches of other denominations. Weaknesses of the study are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. These weaknesses did create some limitations to the generalizability of the study, particularly in terms of age and gender biases in the experimental data pool.

Overview

Chapter 2 explores more fully the biblical principles that underlie a vital prayer life within the congregation. This exploration includes literature that examines the purposes,

historic practices, and benefits of prayer. Literature related to church health is a second area of exploration in Chapter 2. Special attention is devoted to biblical exegesis and literature review on the subject of spiritual dispositions that develop through the life of prayer.

Chapter 3 provides a more detailed plan for *Metanoia* and the experimental design of the study. Chapter 4 furnishes an analysis of the research findings. Chapter 5 reflects upon the meaning of the major findings about congregational prayer life and the health of congregations as well as their implications for the broader life of the church.

CHAPTER 2

The Literature Review

“The churches greatest deficiency today is in **power**--not in programs, strategies, materials, or ideas. And power for ministry can be released only through **prayer**”

(Vander Griend 14).

People come to the church in the hopes of finding power to change their lives. Prayer is the principle means through which the church draws close to God so that God might draw close to us. Outside of the working of the Holy Spirit, no one has the power to change another person's heart. Carlo Carretto uses the image of an electric wire to describe the role of the church in transforming lives. The church is a vital connection to the power source, but in and of itself, the church is powerless unless plugged in to the power (121). As such, a prayer-based ministry is more than a ministry in which prayer is taken seriously and practiced diligently. When a church chooses to depend upon prayer, prayer becomes the new paradigm for the health of the church. The *prayer paradigm* is the example of Jesus in his earthly ministry and the model of the first-century church.

The Prayer Paradigm for Church Health

Jesus worked hard. Mark 3:20,21 described Jesus' own family coming to the conclusion that he was "out of his mind" for working such long hours, not even leaving time for meals. Yet, there is no evidence that Jesus relied on his own efforts to accomplish what the Father sent him to do. "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing" (John 5:19). Jesus' efforts were an unbroken response to the direction of his heavenly Father. This is the paradigm of prayer-based ministry. Healthy ministry is hearing what God is saying and cooperating with God in furthering the work of

the Holy Spirit. Listening to God in prayer is the first movement that lays the foundation upon which true obedience to God's directives can follow.

In the foreword to Tekyl's book, *Pray and Grow*, Ezra Earl Jones of the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church cites a 1987 research study in which selected growing United Methodist churches were asked to rank the top ten factors that contribute to church growth. These pastors of growing churches listed the top ten factors in the following order: vital worship services, fellowship, the pastor, sharply targeted ministries, community and world outreach, Christian education, planning for church growth, physical facilities and location, lay ministries, and evangelistic outreach(4). The absence of prayer in this list of the ten most important factors for church growth is a telling omission. Since the study did not specifically address the role of prayer in church growth, one can only guess why prayer is not mentioned as a factor. These pastors may have assumed that prayer is an unspoken ingredient in any vital ministry. It would seem safe to assume that none of these pastors would describe prayer as meaningless or unimportant in the health or growth of the church. Yet, prayer is not cited as an intentional priority.

The biblical account of the early church makes no mention of factors like sharply targeted ministries, physical facilities, or Christian education as key elements in church health. To the contrary, the key dynamic in the extraordinary vitality of the early church was prayer. Before his ascension, Jesus' instructions to the disciples were simple: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised" (Acts 1:4). In other words, Jesus directed the disciples to carry on the work he began by rejecting the activist impulse to do something in favor of waiting in prayer for God to direct their actions. To their

credit, these disciples followed directions. Acts 1:14 pictured them as "joined together constantly in prayer" prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

This pattern of prayer in one accord is the golden thread in the story of the miraculous growth of the church. After Pentecost the disciples faced the task of incorporating 3,000 new members-into the congregation. In response to this need a standard pattern for church life emerged: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). As a result of this church growth strategy, the early church witnessed daily additions to their numbers. Acts 4:32 pictures the first church fellowship as "one in heart and mind." This unity of prayer produced unparalleled generosity and unselfishness.

As the church fellowship grew, the leaders confronted the need for delegation of responsibilities to meet the increasing needs of the congregation. In this case example, a conflict had arisen over the distribution of food to widows (Acts 6:1-4). They resolved the problem by selecting seven reliable men to oversee the details of the feeding program. This division of labor allowed the leaders to focus on the core leadership tasks. "We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to *prayer* and the ministry of the word." In contrast to the performance-based paradigm in which church growth implies ever-widening circles of pastoral effort and influence, the apostles responded to increasing numbers by focusing on prayer.

These apostolic leaders were modeling what they had seen Jesus do. The Bible portrays Jesus praying at every major turning point of his ministry. The pattern is simple. Jesus did not act without praying. Before he initiated his public ministry, Jesus spent forty days praying and fasting in the desert. When the time came for Jesus to reveal his mission to the disciples, he prayed before speaking. "Once when Jesus was praying in private and

his disciples were with him, he asked them . . . 'Who do you say that I am?' " (Luke 9:18-20). When Jesus revealed his glory to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, prayer was the context of the revelation (Luke 9:28,29). All of the gospels picture Jesus preparing for his crucifixion by praying the night before.

These biblical examples point to a prayer paradigm for ministry based on radical dependence on God. In the biblical model of the church, ministry is fundamentally a spiritual enterprise with relational and physical manifestations. Paul coined the word *pneumatikos* to describe the distinct manner in which the Holy Spirit works compared to worldly ways (Collins 83). Prayer is God's chosen way to communicate the Holy Spirit to the church.

Secular Greek Roots of Prayer

New Testament understandings of prayer rely in significant ways upon secular Greek categories for the practice of prayer. The most common New Testament words for prayer, *euchomai* and *proseuchomai*, were frequently used in secular Greek literature in reference to prayer. *Proseuchomai* connoted prayer to the gods rather than petitions to another human being. The earliest literal meaning of *proseuchomai* is "to vow" in the same sense that the word appears in Acts 18:18 ff. where Paul cut his hair because he had taken a vow.

In secular Greek practice, prayer was usually accompanied by a sacrifice to provide pleasure to the gods. The context of Greek literature suggests that the gods do not answer prayer out of moral considerations, but rather with a more capricious attitude that is unaffected by the merits of the human situation. In fact, the point of prayer in secular Greek understanding was to befriend the gods who help human beings out of motives of sympathy and personal affection.

Greek mystery religions provide important background to New Testament prayer. In these cults, the prayer life of the individual was primary. Religious people were united solely by rites of consecration. Whatever power one might have to affect personal destiny was attributed to the fervency of the individual's prayer. Where prayer life was concerned, the mystery cults lacked any priority on a community of believers. Instead, adherents of the mystery cults sought a mystical experience to which the content of prayer was secondary. Jesus' warning in Matthew 6:7 against "babbling like pagans" pointed to the frenzied prayer common to Greek mystery cults (Greeven 775-784).

Old Testament Background of Prayer

Marti and Wellhausen suggested in their analysis of the root meanings of prayer in Israelite religion that the original sense of the word was "to stroke the face of God" (41). This insight suggests that Hebrew prayer was based on the presupposition that God is not an idea or theological construct, but a personal reality. Psalm 62:8 captured the sense of heart-felt, personal discourse in prayer as the psalmist called the people of Israel to "pour out your hearts to him." Old Testament prayer focused much more on the heart or inner dispositions of the people than forms or practices of prayer. The basic attitude of prayer was captured in the term, *hithpa'el*, which means "to respectfully bow down." God is personal and compassionate, but also a holy God whose very nature demands reverence (Herrmann 788).

In his study of prayer in the Old Testament, Herrmann commented, "To write a history of prayer in Israel would be to write a history of the religion of Israel in general" (790). Hebrew prayer captured the essence of what the Israelites believed about God and their relationship to God. In this vein, the *Shema*, Israel's historic affirmation of the nature of God, was the central prayer of Old Testament religion. "Hear, O Israel, the

Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This prayer proclaimed both the sovereignty and the holiness of God as the one true God.

Hebrew prayer also affirmed that the one true God has made an everlasting covenant with God's people, Israel. The faith of the community was the context for individual prayers. In Old Testament understanding prayer to God is more communication between Yahweh and Israel than God and an individual human being.

Yet, Old Testament prayer clearly presupposed that God is active in the ordinary affairs of people. The psalms are full of petitions to God for personal healing and help with personal dilemmas. Within the context of the covenant people, individual righteousness affected the efficacy of one's prayers. "Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him" (Psalm 4:3).

Much of the prophetic commentary on prayer focused upon the necessity of Israel's faithfulness to God as a requisite condition for answered prayer. The prophets condemned the disingenuous corporate life of Israel. Amos proclaimed that the prayers of Israel are detestable to God because they are nothing more than rhetoric (Amos 5:21-24). Godly attitudes of mercy and justice reflected in consistent ethical behavior were valued far more in prayer than any set of rituals or word formulas (Marti and Wellhausen 798-800).

New Testament Distinctives on Prayer

When New Testament writers speak of prayer, *proseuchomai*, it no longer refers to appeasement of a capricious god or an attempt to manipulate destiny. Instead, prayer in the New Testament focuses upon Jesus. Jesus is the model, the intercessor, and the embodiment of prayer. The intimacy with God and confidence in prayer that Jesus' own prayers modeled permeated the mentality of the early church.

Although the prayers of Jesus' followers were influenced by Jewish piety and Greek culture, the distinctive of Christian prayer was the absolute confidence with which they prayed. Early Christians were certain God heard their prayers. Their confidence in answered prayer relied upon a view of the heavenly Father as deeply concerned and utterly reliable. "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

God's reliability was a certainty to Jesus' followers. However, the efficacy of New Testament prayer hinged on the heart attitudes of the people. In this vein, self-seeking attitudes were an obstacle to prayer (James 4:3). Broken relationships, particularly between marriage partners, could be a hindrance to prayer (I Peter 3:7). In teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus emphasized the necessity of forgiveness as a prerequisite to effective prayer (Matthew 6:12).

One of the most striking attitudes of prayer taught by Jesus is the necessity to pray for one's enemies (Luke 6:28). This attitude of prayer is unique to Christian teaching about prayer. The Greek Stoics prayed for clarity about their own nature, that is, that they might know themselves. Mystics prayed in order to become more detached from the decay and bondage of the world. Jesus taught his followers a remarkable attitude of surrender to God's care by confronting unjust suffering in prayer for their persecutors (Greeven 804-808).

Conversatio Morum

Prayer changes things because prayer changes us. Spiritual leaders have reflected for centuries on the inevitable change of heart that occurs in those who pray. St. Benedict refers to the process of change that God works in prayer as "conversatio morum," which literally means "talk of death" (Foster 57). *Conversatio morum* refers to the death of the

status quo, saying "no" to remaining where we are for the sake of comfort. More positively, the term refers to constant change and constant conversion. St. Benedict is pointing to a dynamic of progress in the spiritual life in which God is dissatisfied to simply answer our requests and leave us as God found us. Conversation with God causes people to grow. Behind this growth is a process of letting go of fear-based dispositions that prevent us from giving our lives away. Self-centeredness, competitiveness, and fear of others gradually fall away as we die to the status quo of worldly ways.

Rubingh describes prayer as "twice blessed." When we pray, God answers with blessings for the people we uplift, but also for the one who is praying. Christians pray with two compelling motives:

1. Prayer is a biblical imperative, a command from God.
2. All human beings have a felt need to communicate with someone greater than themselves.

God destroys the status quo in relationships and heart attitudes through the double blessing of prayer. At the least, prayer creates a growing fellowship with God, increased openness to God's leading, and a sense of peace in the midst of turmoil. At best, prayer teaches the discipline of unselfishness through which those who pray search for power and blessing for others rather than themselves (23-27).

Active and Passive Forms of Prayer

Richard Foster points out that formation through prayer is a journey with both active and passive qualities. The active pursuit of formation through prayer is a process of humbling oneself before God. Humility is a spiritual quality that cannot be directly accessed. However, the Bible speaks of humility as letting go of our resistance to God's guidance and opening our lives to God's grace. Proverbs 3:34 states that "God opposes

the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6 quotes this proverb to emphasize that surrendering one's life to God's will is the beginning of true transformation.

Classic thinkers in spirituality promoted the necessity of humility in spiritual formation. *The Rule of St. Benedict* is a program of twelve action steps through which one develops the humility to be usable for God's purposes. This spiritual program begins with a spirit of repentance for a rebellious life. Change comes when a person commits his or her life to obedience to God's commands. Through progressive steps of humility and obedience, the seeker develops a servant's heart in the example of Jesus. The outcome of a life humbled before God is the experience of perfect love that casts out all fear (Benedict 56-61).

Terese of Lisieux, "The Little Flower," wrote in her autobiography of the "little way" of prayer as another form of active spiritual formation. The little way is roughly analogous to random acts of kindness in which people do menial tasks, show kindness to an annoying person, or secretly do helpful things as intentional spiritual growth. Terese saw these little ways of serving accompanied by constant prayer as gifts to Jesus that surpassed anything of notoriety she might have done. Prayer and service for Terese were not so much obedience as joyful gift giving (36).

Practicing the Presence of God lays out a third approach to active formation through prayer. Brother Lawrence, the self-described "lord of the pots and pans," spent his years in the monastery in servant roles such as kitchen helper. He developed a spirituality that gloried in the ordinary and commonplace. Lawrence wrote that he had found "the most excellent method of going to God was that of doing our common business without any view of pleasing men, and purely for the love of God It (is) a great delusion to think that times of prayer ought to differ from other times" (19).

Lawrence integrated prayer in everything he did as an active response to the biblical admonition to "pray without ceasing."

The complementary approach to active pursuit of formation through prayer is the passive waiting upon God in quiet anticipation.¹ Hesychastic traditions of eastern Christianity emphasize making a space to hear God through rhythmic, constant prayer. This tradition of "breath prayers" is best exemplified in the "Jesus Prayer" which was popularized in *The Way of a Pilgrim*, a nineteenth century publication of an anonymous Russian peasant. This simple man revealed how his every waking moment was occupied with the constant prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Bacovein 4). The intent of breath prayers that begin as voicings of our longing for God is to soak the consciousness with prayer so that over time prayer becomes a part of our unconscious life.

Unceasing prayer was the goal of prayer practices such as those described by Brother Lawrence and adherents of hesychastic practices like breath prayers. The command to pray without ceasing is reflected in several biblical injunctions. "Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Hebrews 13:15). "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

¹ *Hesychia*, stillness or silence, refers to prayer traditions from Eastern spirituality. It refers primarily to going apart to the desert for solitude. Gregory Palamas is the primary theologian who taught hesychastic practices (Holt 55).

Foster suggested that unceasing prayer develops in the disciple through four stages of maturity:

1. Outward discipline in which the disciple consciously develops breath prayers and focus on God throughout the day.
2. Incorporation of continuous prayer into the subconscious mind, much as one might subconsciously hum a favorite song throughout the day.
3. Adoption of continuous prayer within the heart so that sentiment and reason begin to act together.
4. Permeation of the whole personality with prayer much as blood circulates through the blood vessels (126-127).

Bernard of Clairvaux spoke of three "foods for the soul": "Humility, bitter but medicinal; charity, sweet and soothing; and contemplation, solid and strength giving"(33). From Bernard to Thomas Merton seekers after God have discovered the formative power of quiet contemplation. Contemplation emphasizes listening to God as in a conversation between lovers. Many spiritual teachers combine *lectio divina* (formative reading of the Scriptures) and meditation with the practice of contemplation. Solitude and silence are the earmarks of contemplation. Union with God is the goal. In the progressive steps of this type of formative prayer, contemplation is most meaningful to those who have gone beyond obsession with their own needs and desires. Contemplation is a hunger for deep intimacy with God that precludes our need to do all of the talking.

Ironically, contemplation is one form of prayer that is not practiced corporately. Yet, centuries of reflection about spiritual formation have produced a unanimity of opinion that Christians and churches cannot achieve and maintain health unless people spend time

alone with God. In many ways church leaders who practice contemplative prayer become the ears of the Body of Christ as they discipline themselves to listen for the voice of God.

The Korean Model for Prayer

Korea is home to some of the most vital churches in the world today. The world's largest Methodist and Presbyterian churches are in Seoul. Seoul is also home to the Yoido Full Gospel Central Church, the world's largest church, with more than one million members. The common factor in the lives of these remarkable churches is their reliance upon prayer as the central dynamic of their ministries. More than 2,000 Christian churches minister in Seoul through a common pattern of prayer life. All of these churches conduct early morning prayer meetings 365 days a year as the keystone of church life. Some of the larger churches conduct as many as three daily morning services beginning at 4:00 am. Contrary to the slim crowds found at early morning prayer services in American churches, Korean prayer services experience attendance at maximum seating capacity.

Friday night is as important as Sunday morning in the life of the Korean church. Korean churches host prayer meetings that begin at ten o'clock at night and go until dawn. The largest church in Seoul, Full Gospel Central Church, holds Wednesday night prayer vigils as well to accommodate the crowds of people who cannot find seats on Friday nights. On a typical Friday night in Seoul, researchers estimate that a quarter of a million people pray all night.

Prayer mountains dot the landscape of South Korea. More than 200 churches in Seoul own mountains on which they have constructed facilities for prayer and fasting. While American Christians use weekends as time away for recreational outings, Koreans flock to prayer mountains where they remain for days, many for as long as twenty-one days, in prayer and fasting.

In contrasting Korean and American churches, Wagner points to priority of space in the church as representing different theologies about prayer. While the central feature

of an American church is the sanctuary, the centerpiece of Korean churches is the prayer closet. Every Korean pastor who serves a church with a building has a prayer closet in which he prays daily and typically spends Saturday night praying in preparation for Sunday morning services. Prayer closets are occupied twenty-four hours a day by church members who sign up for available times (Churches 24-27).

While most American churches are founded on church growth principles of one variety or another, Korean churches are founded on prayer. Paul Yonggi Cho refers to the foundation of his church as the "fourth dimension," that is, the dimension of the Holy Spirit. Through the process of *incubation* the church exercises faith in prayer that unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit. Cho describes four necessary steps to powerful prayer:

1. *Envision a clear-cut objective.*

Drawing on the definition of faith found in Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (KJV), Cho suggests that effective prayer begins with a vision of what God is blessing. In Cho's teaching, believers become "pregnant" with God's visions through prayer. The physical manifestations of blessings appear in life after they have incubated for a proper time in the heart of the believer. The concept of incubation builds upon a distinction between the general word of God (*logos*) and the specific, personal word of God (*rhema*). The *logos* is the word of God that speaks to all people in all time, "In the beginning was the word (*logos*) and the word was with God and the word was God" (John 1:1). *Rhema* is the spoken word of God that is quickened by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the listener producing faith and answered prayer. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word (*rhema*) of Christ" (Romans 10:17) (Fourth Dimension 90-91).

2. *Have a burning desire.*

Korean churches teach their people that the first objective in prayer is to ask God to give them a hunger and thirst for God's will. Once the heart is warmed in prayer, God

can bless with power. The opposite state of the heart is lukewarmness that the Risen Christ vigorously condemned in the church at Laodicea. "So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16).

The kind of lukewarmness to God found at Laodicea was grounded in arrogance and self-reliance. As an alternative to self-reliance, Cho points to burning desire in prayer as the key disposition God uses to meet all the needs of God's people. "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).

3. Pray for assurance.

Assurance is the inner witness from the Holy Spirit of confidence that God is acting and answering prayer. This is the principle of waiting upon the Lord to respond in God's time and way. Korean pastors frequently refer to Mark 11:24 to point to the critical importance of waiting with assurance for God to act: "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." The concept of assurance is the faith that one has received an answer to prayer before the blessing is physically manifested.

4. Speak the word.

Abram changed his name to Abraham, which means "the father of many nations," after God promised a son but years before Isaac was born. Cho draws upon this biblical example as one illustration of the principle of evidence of faith. In other words, he suggests that power in prayer involves living into the promises of God. When believers pray with faith, they proceed with life as if their prayers have already been answered. This is the principle of "speaking the word" to bring forth in life what God has purposed to do (Fourth Dimension 9-35).

The underlying theology behind this kind of reliance on prayer is the belief that the church is the earthly expression of the Holy Spirit. When Korean pastors speak of living in the fourth dimension, they point to the realm of the spirit that is in continuity with and controls the other dimensions of life. Their assumption is that all of life is orchestrated by

the spirit world for good or evil. The key to life in God and a vibrant church is to intentionally seek the rule of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church.

Rhetoric Prayer and Action Prayer

Peter Wagner's diagnosis of American churches suggests that most churches talk about prayer more than they pray. He makes a distinction between *rhetoric* prayer and *action* prayer in terms of effectiveness of a church's prayer life to transform lives.

Effective prayer bears two distinguishing marks:

1. Asking in Jesus' name. "Whatever you ask in my name, that I will do"

(John 14:13).

2. Abiding in Jesus. "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).

Citing research findings that indicate that most pastors of growing churches do not attribute the growth of their churches to prayer, Wagner asserts that growth in these churches refers to numerical and organizational indicators that are the product of carefully applied management principles. Where prayer is little more than rhetoric, the church prays as a secondary or tertiary priority. In churches with this view, prayer is a program or a discrete ministry of those with a gift for prayer. Prayer is a part of the worship service and a pastoral ministry to the sick. Prayer leaders invoke Jesus' name out of reverence for the Lord or force of habit but not with the belief that prayer is the root of power in their ministry.

By contrast, action prayer orients the church to seek everything that is needed in Jesus' name. Prayer becomes the first act of leadership and the principal means of discernment in the life of the church. The goal in action prayer is that prayer might become a lifestyle in which believers abide in constant communion with God. Action prayer is an intimate relationship with the Father that grows daily through personal communication with God (Churches 42-46).

The Nature of Vital Prayer

Churches pray the way they do for reasons. Every church has prayer traditions that lead the people to rely more or less on prayer for their life in God. The prayer life and theology of the pastor has a great deal to do with the amount of interest the congregation shows in prayer. If the church has experienced miraculous answers to prayer and someone has preserved this memory through personal testimonies, congregational prayer life is positively affected.

When churches want to develop a more vital prayer life, five principles of prayer that Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer must be grasped:

1. Prayer is personal intimacy with God.
2. Prayer depends upon God's sovereignty.
3. Prayer is cooperation with God.
4. Prayer is a triangulated relationship.
5. Prayer invokes God's power in the midst of struggle (Roberts 20-97).

Thousands of Christian churches pray the Lord's Prayer on a weekly basis. Unfortunately, much of the time the Lord's Prayer is recited as a rote tradition with little or no awareness of the revolutionary teaching in this prayer. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus taught not only a method of praying, but also the true nature of prayer.

Jeremias points out that the term "father" appears numerous times in the Old Testament as a reference to God. By contrast, Jesus' use of the word "abba" is a personal, fresh way to refer to God. Abba is a term taken from the everyday language of people, a term of endearment that a child might use for her father. A more accurate English translation of abba is "daddy" (72). Jesus intentionally chose this language for God to teach a fresh point. Beginning with the first words of the prayer, Jesus taught that praying is an act of personal intimacy with God that has no room for pretense or formality.

Of equal interest in the Lord's Prayer is Jesus' choice of pronouns. All of the pronouns in this prayer are plural, *our* Father, forgive *us our* debts, lead *us* not into

temptation, and so on. The Lord's Prayer is a corporate prayer, a prayer that draws the people of God together whether prayed alone or in a common gathering. Jesus teaches here that the nature of prayer is communal. The entire community is affected by whether and how we pray.

For all of the intimacy with which we approach God in prayer, prayer is also an exercise in the fear of the Lord. *"Hallowed be thy name."* This personal communication with God is like no other because God is holy. Prayer is an act of adoration and reverence. Although we come as beloved children before God, we also come in radical subjection to God's sovereignty.

Effective prayer depends upon the alignment of the human will with the will of God. The dual "Thou" petitions, *"Thy Kingdom come . . . Thy will be done,"* express this nature of prayer. These petitions actually invoke God's power to change our hearts and wills to align them with God's will. The principle of cooperation is at work here. Prayer changes lives and circumstances when we cooperate with what God is doing (Jeremias 129-130).

The plain meaning of the petition "Give us this day our daily bread" is two-fold:

1. We depend on God for our physical lives.
2. God is active in the details of our lives.

With this teaching, Jesus emphasizes the immanent nature of God who responds to requests to draw near. The daily bread petition also teaches us that God is in the present, "this day." God desires that God's people pray daily, in the present moment, not only on the Sabbath or appointed religious days.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Lord's Prayer is the role of forgiveness. More than a component of Jesus' teaching on prayer, it is the emphasis. The necessity of forgiving others in order to be forgiven ourselves is the only feature of the prayer that Jesus repeats (Matthew 6:14,15). The emphasis upon forgiveness teaches that prayer is a

means of reconciliation to God, effective only when we take personal responsibility for reconciliation with others in our lives. Prayer is a triangulated relationship.

Willard focuses upon the quality of God's pity toward human beings in the petition for forgiveness of sins. The Lord's Prayer offers God no excuses for our sinful behavior and attitudes. Believers simply ask God to have pity and be merciful in keeping with the nature of God. God's pity is sought not only as forgiveness for specific wrongdoing, but also as the prevailing atmosphere of a believer's life. The ability to rely on the pity of God permits the believer to go past defensiveness and fear to a life that is open to reconciliation with God and others.

Likewise, the conditional quality of the forgiveness petition is not so much a bargain with God as a statement of reality. Human beings are not psychologically capable of simultaneously knowing God's pity and remaining hardhearted toward another person. In the Lord's Prayer, believers go beyond promising God to forgive others by trying harder. Through this petition, those who pray admit that they need help from God in forgiving those who have wounded them. In the spiritual unity of prayer, God gives the capacity to forgive one another where such forgiveness was not a possibility (Willard 262-264).

The dual petitions that end the Lord's Prayer point to the spiritual warfare characteristics of prayer. *"Lead us not into temptation"* is more accurately translated "through" temptation. This is a petition for perseverance in the face of inevitable trials in life. Jeremias believed that the early church had apostasy in mind as the ultimate temptation in this petition (84). Whether this interpretation is correct or not, the temptation petition acknowledges that believers are incapable of staying the course of faith outside of the power of God through prayer.

The final petition, *"deliver us from the evil one,"* points to the spiritual attacks to which believers are subject. When the devil was frustrated in his attempt to derail Jesus' ministry during the forty days of temptation, he did not give up. Luke 4:13 makes the

unsettling assertion that the devil left Jesus until "a more opportune time." Believers face this same tenacity of the enemy from which God alone can deliver

These petitions for protection are also a "no confidence" vote on the ability of human beings to take care of themselves. Again, Willard points out that these petitions seek God's pity in protection from circumstances beyond human control. Jesus' teaching on prayer is a corrective against excessive confidence in the power of our own faith (265-266). Believers affirm three truths of the spiritual life by praying, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one":

1. We vastly increase the danger to ourselves and others through the false belief that our faith alone is adequate to our needs.
2. The mark of spiritual maturity is increasing dependence on God.
3. Deliverance from spiritual oppression will eventually come through the power of the Risen Christ. "Take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Harper asserts that the Lord's Prayer teaches believers both a "first wind" and a "second wind" of prayer. Jesus taught the "first wind" of prayer in the form of the meaning, message, and substance of prayer. Beyond these important teachings, the Lord's Prayer draws believers into the spirit of true prayer, that "second wind" of motivation for praying. The key to a growing life in prayer is more than learning how to pray more accurately. Desire more than technique is necessary to sustain growth in the life of prayer. Through the Lord's Prayer believers practice intimacy with God implied in addressing God as "abba" (9-11).

Forms of Congregational Prayer

In *The Interior Castle*, Theresa of Avila described the pathway of growth in prayer. She wrote that in prayer she traveled within herself until she came to that interior castle where she met Jesus, the bridegroom, and became his bride. Then she turned in prayer and moved out to heal the world in Jesus' name (22). God provides congregations the same pattern of movement toward the heart of God through prayer.

Foster elaborates on the witness of Theresa of Avila and other classical spiritual writers by describing spiritual formation in terms of a three-fold movement. In prayer, God transforms believers through growth in an upward direction (one's relationship to God), an inward direction (the relationship to one's self), and an outward direction (relationships with other people) (4-5). In other words, God uses prayer to facilitate obedience to the great command, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind" (upward movement) . . .and "Love your neighbor" (outward movement) "as yourself" (inward movement) (Matthew 22:37-39).

The popular "ACTS" form of prayer includes these three critical movements of prayer. In *Too Busy Not to Pray*, Hybels prescribes the ACTS pattern as a standard form for those who are learning to pray. The acronym, ACTS, represents adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. According to Hybels, every time of prayer should begin with adoration of God as we stand in awe of God's holiness and loving character. Confession is the doorway to powerful prayer because getting honest with God by confessing our sins removes obstacles of guilt, shame, and unforgiveness. Thanksgiving is the proper context of prayer as we remember God's constant care and incomparable generosity. Only after we have set the stage of a heart-to-heart conversation with God through adoration, confession, and thanksgiving are we prepared for supplication, making our requests known to God (18-31).

Warren suggests that God acts in four ways to change human hearts. In prayer we declare our radical dependence on God. Prayer is a communication with God that informs our lives and actions. Through supplication, prayer calls upon God to act directly in the details of our lives. As an act of cooperation, prayer links together our hearts with the heart of God toward the doing of God's will (Prayer 1983).

On a congregational level, the three-fold movement of prayer appears in the practices of churches where prayer is a priority. Churches express the *inward* movement

of repentance and renewal through dramatic initiatives such as ²Solemn Assemblies as well as the unobtrusive practice of prayer in designated prayer rooms. Prayer partner ministries, prayer walks, and prayer retreats draw congregations into the *upward* movement of seeking God's direction and empowerment for congregational life.

In *Partners in Prayer* Maxwell emphasizes pastors' needs for partners in prayer in order to be effective spiritual leaders. Drawing upon Exodus 17: 8-13, he points out that Joshua's success in battle depended upon Moses faithfulness in prayer on the mountain. Even more, Moses' ability to keep praying and leading required that partners, Aaron and Hur, hold up his arms. Maxwell lays out a plan for a prayer partner ministry within the local church that accomplishes four spiritual objectives:

1. Unleashing prayer potential beyond human effort in the church.
2. Developing a deeper sense of unity and mutual love in the church.
3. Protecting pastors and pastors' families from spiritual attack.
4. Opening the door for effective evangelism through prayer (14-21).

Prayer evangelism through ministries such as Lighthouses of Prayer expresses the need to move *outward* in prayer to the needs of lost and hurting people. Lighthouses of Prayer is a nationwide initiative among evangelical churches that challenges Christians to pray for the neighbors who live on their streets. The specific focus of Lighthouses of Prayer is to pray that unbelieving neighbors might come to faith in Jesus Christ (Vander Griend 360).

Tekyl uses the term "new prayer" to describe the kind of powerful prayer life that God wants for churches. He points to seven characteristics of congregations in which prayer is the vital center (*Praying* 78-83).

1. Thy kingdom come.

New prayer focuses upon God's agenda rather than the church's agenda. A kingdom agenda is characterized by radical willingness to do whatever is necessary for

² Solemn Assemblies are prayer gatherings focused upon repentance in the tradition of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-34).

God's will to be accomplished. Churches that pray with God's agenda in mind display an urgency to discern where God is working and to meet God in that place.

2. The Holy Spirit factor.

The church can accomplish good things, even some wonderful goals, through human effort. But only God can change human hearts and do miraculous, supernatural deeds. Tekyl coined the term "Apollos Principle" to describe the way most churches operate. Apollos was described in Acts 18:24-28 as a "learned man with thorough knowledge of the Scriptures (who) spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately." For all of his good points, Apollos did not understand the Holy Spirit and had not received the Spirit. So Priscilla and Aquila invited him into their home and "explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:26). The distinctive that separates Christian ministry from altruistic volunteer organizations is the work of the Holy Spirit. New prayer is an expression of God's own person, not a program.

3. Unity.

The unity of God's people mattered so much to Jesus that he focused his teaching and prayers on unity on the night before he died. "I pray also for all those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one" (John 17:20,21). John stated earlier in the gospel that the motivation for Jesus' sacrificial death was "to bring them together and make them one" (John 11:52). Prayer focus in the church produces unity as God leads us to reconciliation with God and one another. New prayer is not only a call to unity within congregations, but also a challenge to churches across denominational lines to set aside a competitive spirit and cooperate in winning the world for Christ.

4. New approaches with new materials.

The past decade has witnessed an explosion of global interest in prayer. As such, churches that want to make prayer a priority have available to them a plethora of teaching and curriculum materials that simply did not exist ten years ago. Many congregations hunger and thirst for a deeper relationship with God but lack training in prayer. Prayer

schools like the Prayer College of Community Church of Joy in Phoenix, Arizona offer church leaders the training they need to launch an intentional prayer ministry in their churches. Specific how-to resources are available for implementing prayer rooms, prayer retreats, prayer groups, and a host of related ministries.

5. Grass roots.

A startling distinctive of the new prayer movement is the character of its leadership. By and large, those who lead the way in vital prayer ministries are not theologians or spiritual writers but ordinary people who yearn for more of God. The new prayer movement expresses the Body of Christ in all its diversity. The 1997 "Stand in the Gap" gathering of Christian men that attracted hundreds of thousands of men to come together to pray is an example of the grass roots movement.

6. The Apex.

The new prayer movement affirms that prayer is the fabric of our life in God rather than a last resort or marginal activity in the church. The new prayer movement asserts that prayer must be the paradigm for ministry. It is the foundation, the beginning, and the end. Prayer is the life-giving center of our corporate spiritual life that determines our course and saturates every decision.

One of the most startling examples of the empowerment that comes to churches through prayer focus is the Brooklyn Tabernacle Church in New York City. When Jim Cymbala came as a young pastor to the Brooklyn Tabernacle in 1972, he found a congregation of less than twenty persons meeting in a dilapidated facility. This church offered little hope of becoming a viable congregation in human terms. Not only was the congregation in terrible disrepair, the entire neighborhood around the Brooklyn Tabernacle was an inner-city ghetto characterized by rampant crime, widespread poverty, and hopelessness. As a last resort, Cymbala started a Tuesday night prayer meeting that became a catalyst for miraculous change. Over a period of years many persons experienced healings and deliverance through this prayer ministry and the church found

revival. Through prayer God led the congregation in a step-by-step process of renewal through evangelism, mission outreach, and music ministry. Today, Brooklyn Tabernacle is a vital 6,000 member church built on the foundation of prayer (12-24).

7. A means to an end.

Prayer ministries that become an end in themselves eventually die out because they are selfish. Rather than being an end in itself, new prayer is a means to accomplishing the work of God. Jesus stated what the work of God in the world is: "The Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). Then, Jesus' commanded us to join him in this work in prayer. "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. *Pray* the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37,38, KJV). Evangelism, the fulfillment of the Great Commission, is the ultimate goal of prayer ministry. Writing in *That None May Be Lost*, Ed Silvano points to the absolute necessity of prayer to undergird evangelism: "Prayer is evangelism!" (4). Silvano emphasizes the New Testament principle of the convicting and converting power of the Holy Spirit. "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:3). Evangelism efforts without prayer are little more than popularity contests or membership recruitment events.

Building a Congregational Prayer Ministry

In thirty years of research, Wagner studied congregational prayer life with an eye to discerning the necessary ingredients for a vital prayer ministry. Despite the wide range of approaches in churches with flourishing prayer ministries, he identified elements which all of these churches have in common. Where congregations have committed pastoral leadership, involvement of intercessors, and gifted prayer leaders, they possess the needed resources to build a prayer ministry (Strategies 83).

Prayer was a priority in the first-century church because it was a priority in the lives and ministries of the apostles. To lead in prayer the pastor must model a devoted personal prayer life and the commitment to lead by listening to God. Leading with prayer

involves the deliberate use of prayer at every level of enterprise in the church. Pastors who pray call together the administrative board and other leadership groups to pray as much as to discuss or deliberate. Most importantly, pastors in praying churches pray for their people and let them know they are praying for them.

Wagner asserts his belief that God has gifted every church with intercessors. By intercessor he refers to persons with a spiritual gift for prayer, persons who spend two to five hours in daily prayer and long to pray more. Intercessors fall into four categories: general, crisis, personal, and warfare intercessors. All of these persons are especially gifted to persevere in prayer and to be sensitive to the spiritual battle in which they are engaged.

Unless the church takes prayer as seriously as worship, Christian education, and fellowship, it will remain a marginal ministry. Leadership is critical in making prayer a priority. In churches with vital prayer ministry, the role of prayer leader is defined and set apart as a vitally important work in the church. A prayer leader is a Christian with an extra measure of devotion to the discipline of prayer who has passion and ability to teach others to pray. Prayer leaders must be spiritually mature and have a strong personal prayer life. Since prayer needs often reflect the most sensitive and tender matters in the lives of people, prayer leaders must be able to keep secrets and show wisdom in avoiding the misuse of prayer chains or prayer meetings as gossip sessions.

Vander Griend points to eight keys to building a vital ministry of prayer. His research cites a growing interest in prayer in American churches as seen by the growing popularity of early morning prayer ministry, the establishment of prayer rooms in many churches, and interest in forming schools of prayer. Underlying these initiatives in prayer, a number of prayer concepts are essential:

1. Pastoral leadership by example of prayer determines whether the congregation takes prayer seriously. Referring to a 1989 survey of 572 pastors, Vander

Griend points out that the average pastor spends eighteen minutes a day in prayer. He suggests that the first step in a vital prayer ministry is for pastors to say no to other demands and make room for a greater prayer life.

2. Prayer ministry must be treated as a high priority in the life and work of the Church. A vital praying ministry requires budgeting of time, energy, money, and space. Prayer ministry that is a priority is reflected in financial commitment, a carefully implemented ministry of prayer teaching, and dedicated space for prayer.
3. Correct thinking about prayer is important. Citing James 4:2, Vander Griend suggests that the spiritual poverty of the church is the direct result of lack of prayer. "You have not because you ask not." Right thinking about prayer also affirms the efficacy of prayer in healing. Not only miraculous healings but also the steady, gentle transformation of human lives requires prayer.
4. Clear communication of needs and answers to prayer is vital. The greatest motivator for the church to pray is regular evidence that prayer works. Prayer leaders need to work through prayer chains, regular testimonies, prayer newsletters and other tools to communicate with the church about the power of prayer.
5. Prayer must be carefully linked to ministry. The fallenness of human beings leads us to turn even the best of gifts in our lives to selfish purposes. For a prayer ministry to remain vital, leaders must prevent prayer from becoming an end in itself. Vital prayer is always in service of God's purposes that God's people grow in their love of God and one another.
6. Prayer ministry must be intentional with many times, ways, and places for people to pray together. In order to remain faithful to prayer, the church must call people out of their isolation to pray with others. Praying together not only reinforces consistency, but also strengthens and expands the power of prayer.

“Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them”
(Matthew 18:20).

7. Leaders devoted to personal prayer drive corporate prayer.

Churches with vital prayer ministries encourage their leaders to pray daily and provide a system of accountability for prayer. An explicit commitment to private prayer is part of the job description for leaders in praying churches.

8. Family devotions must be emphasized as the major arena for teaching prayer to children. Citing Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Vander Griend asserts that the family is the biblical context for teaching faith and the role of the church is to build up families in their teaching ministries (13-22).

Prayer of the Heart

For congregational prayer to be more than rhetoric or a program ministry, prayer must come from the heart, connecting the heart of God to human hearts. Jesus' teaching on prayer consistently pointed to the connection between prayer and heart life. Jesus prohibited certain forms of prayer because they grew out of a disingenuous heart toward God:

1. Praying to the audience for the reward of others' attention and affirmation (Matthew 6:5,6).
2. Meaningless words and repeated formulas in a magical attempt to get something from God (Matthew 6:7,8).
3. Pride and comparison with others in your prayer life (Luke 18:9-14).

As an alternative to religious categories for prayer, Jesus taught that prayer is the fundamental expression of our relationship with God. Not only does prayer express a relationship but also prayer to God is the ultimate act of intimacy, a heart-to-heart talk with God. As noted earlier, Jesus' use of the word *abba* expressed this deep intimacy.

Paul's teaching on prayer emphasized that Jesus is still praying with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Classical spiritual writers speak of three levels of prayer: prayer of the lips, prayer of the mind, and prayer of the heart (Foster 136). Prayer of the heart is that union with God in which God speaks to us and for us with "groans too deep for words" as the "Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Romans 8:26, 27). The power of the prayer of the heart is to know and do God's will.

Unfortunately, division over expressions of the prayer of the heart has hurt the church through the centuries. In the Corinthian church, in-fighting divided the church over glossalalia, or ecstatic prayer language that arose from the prayer of the heart (1Corinthians 12-14). Although spiritual vitality in a church does not require that anyone in the church speak in tongues, a church dominated by prayer of the heart will accept and support those who do pray in this way. The acceptance of a variety of gifts in the church flows out of an openness and fearlessness that God gives as people come to know and love God more deeply (Wagner Healing 28).

God acts in at least two other ways through the prayer of the heart to change people and build up the church. As the Korean church has discovered, a vital prayer life opens human hearts to receive a *rhema*, or specific word from God. Through the prayer of the heart, the Holy Spirit witnesses to individuals in such a way as to allow the general Word of God (logos) to become a personal word (rhema) for a specific need of a specific person. Often people read the Bible and discover a word that strikes the heart as if they had never read it before. In fact, they may have studied the text innumerable times. Sometimes, God speaks a word through a sermon or teaching that ministers directly to the heart of a listener. These examples of *rhema* are empowered by prayer of the heart and are witnessed where congregations ask God to speak (Cho Fourth Dimension 91).

Love is the most obvious and most necessary outpouring from prayer of the heart. To love others as God loves them is impossible outside the work of the Holy Spirit. The most profound change which prayer of the heart works is a growing assurance in God's

love that produces a boldness and fearlessness in loving others. Peter's changed heart toward Gentiles is an example of the change that God effects through prayer. In the story recounted in Galatians 2:11-13, Peter struggled with prejudice toward Gentile believers, refusing to eat at the same table for fear of breaking the Jewish ritual laws. What a contrasting attitude this same man showed in the story related in Acts 10 and 11! The experience of a heavenly vision while praying changed Peter's whole demeanor toward Gentiles. Peter suffered from lifelong prejudices toward those outside Judaism; through prayer he became the champion of an attitude of acceptance towards Gentiles.

Prayer and Revival

Spiritual renewal grows out of concerted prayer. In *Prayer That Brings Revival* Cho outlines the dynamics of spiritual revival that come through prayer:

1. Prayer produces power. When people begin to see the temporal and eternal benefits of prayer, they get motivated to pray. As motivation produces greater desire to pray, the power of prayer increases as well.
2. Powerful prayer produces boldness. "From the time of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven is forcefully advancing and forceful men take hold of it" (Matthew 11:12). Cho asserts that any person or church that is willing to pay the price can have power in prayer. The price to be paid is that of boldness for prayer that makes praying a priority over other activities. Perseverance and discipline in prayer are necessities. A quality of earnestness characterizes those in whom prayer eventually produces revival.
3. Prayer brings brokenness. God can only use people who are broken and surrendered to God. Pride and brokenness cannot co-exist. While the worldly expectation might be that revival will come when the church "gets it right," the biblical pattern is that God used broken, imperfect people to do miraculous things.
4. Authority in prayer will come when God's people abide in Christ. Outside of

abiding relationship with Christ, believers are tempted to arrogance and pride that lead to the misuse of spiritual authority. Spiritual revival that includes authority over demonic forces comes when churches pray in such close communion with Jesus that his intercession for the church is expressed in the details of the life of the church (1-21).

Defining Church Health

Many influential models for church health and growth share a common starting point: human performance. As human performance paradigms, these models attempt to build church vitality by building human effectiveness and competence. Of course, God expects God's people to work hard for the Kingdom of God and to build up our competencies.

Equipping people to be better leaders is the biblical norm. Ephesians 4:11,12 described the equipping of the saints as the principal task of a pastor. Likewise, elements of ministry such as vibrant small group ministries and contagious worship services are invaluable components in the vitality of the church. A problem can arise, however, when leaders think that the health of the church depends on human competency. Such distorted thinking about church health implies that the way to a healthier church is for the leaders to work harder and become more competent. Such thinking leads to churches built up in the strength of the flesh.

Church health is the subject of many books and articles that approach the subject from psychological, organizational, and communication perspectives. Warren makes a strong case for the organismic nature of the church in *The Purpose Driven Church*, but proceeds to define church health in organizational terms. Warren proposes that health in the church is a matter of balance among five critical purposes for which God created the church:

Purpose #1: "Love the Lord with all your heart." This is the purpose of worship
Or *magnification* (103).

Purpose #2: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This purpose relates to caring for people's needs or *ministry* (104).

Purpose #3: "Go and make disciples." This purpose relates to evangelism or *mission* (104).

Purpose #4: "Baptize them." This command of the Lord points to the purpose of fellowship, helping people to belong or become *members* (105).

Purpose #5: "Teaching them to obey." This is the purpose of discipleship, working together intentionally to foster *maturity* (106).

Similarly, Michael Slaughter asserts that "the life is in the cell" by way of pointing to the need to view the church as the living Body of Christ. Yet, Slaughter limits his discussion of body life to small groups, contemporary worship, mission ministries, and other programmatic considerations (85). Notwithstanding the helpfulness of this church growth literature, prayer is virtually a silent topic.

Sweet has coined the term, "Ancient-Future Church" to suggest the type of church that can thrive in the twenty-first century (22). The Ancient-Future church is one in which leaders "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3).

Sweet emphasizes that church health combines the preservation of non-negotiable, core values in the church with openness to changing cultural forms and temporal values.

Wagner speaks of this same mix of qualities that leads to church health in terms of "third wave" churches that are vitally engaged with the present while reclaiming reliance on the Holy Spirit (11-36).

Both of these writers point to a new generation of vital church that blends a devotion to prayer and study of the word with a deep desire to evangelize the world. In other words, they are suggesting that the health of the church requires a breakdown of barriers to the work of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is a key element in this transformation process. In *Strategies for Church Growth*, Wagner suggests that prayer produces several

key changes within church leaders that lead to church health and growth. In prayer, leaders learn to:

1. Discern their own complacency.
2. See other Christian leaders and churches as extended family rather than competitors.
3. Develop an openness to learn from others and develop active partnerships.
4. Make repentance a life disposition.
5. Develop an eye to see where God blessing and a willingness to do what God is blessing (21-24).

Gangel and Canine apply communication theory as a measure of health in the life of the church. Their basic premise is that church health requires good communication among people. Healthy communication is honest sharing of feelings without resort to shaming others or inducing guilt. Conflict in human communities is inevitable, but in healthy congregations conflict gets resolved speedily, openly, and with respect for all parties. A key dynamic in healthy communication in the church is the priority on relationships. Gangel and Canine contend that a priority on relationships is always appropriate in the church because relationships are the business of the church. They are especially concerned about non-verbal communication, "the message within the message," that dominates human relationships but often remains unconscious in communication (211-224).

Communication theory stops short of addressing the role of prayer in healthy congregational communication. Since much of the effectiveness of communication depends upon the climate in which people are communicating, what impact does prayer have on the interpersonal climate? The Bible claims that prayer creates a culture of love in which deeper communication is possible, "*Pray . . . let your conversation be seasoned with salt so that you may know how to answer everyone*" (Colossians 4:6).

Communication is a two-way process in which listening is often the neglected side

of the exchange. The communication technique of active listening is the intentional engagement of the other while remaining silent. Again, prayer empowers us to hear from the heart. When Philip heard the Ethiopian eunuch reading from the prophet Isaiah, he heard more than words. Because he could hear this man's cry of the heart, he could share the good news of Jesus Christ with him (Acts 8:30-38).

In *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*, Peter Steinke suggests that the healthy Body of Christ depends upon a synergistic system of health involving eight key components. These eight "health promoters" include:

1. A sense of purpose for the congregation as a whole.
2. Ability to manage conflict.
3. A sense of coherence between values and congregational life.
4. Clarity of vision and direction.
5. Positive and encouraging mood and tone.
6. Mature interactions among leaders and between leaders and followers.
7. Capacity for healing.
8. A focus on resources rather than scarcity.

Where these factors exist, the health of congregations naturally leads to growth. Attitudes of openness and flexibility naturally flow out of these dispositions (27-31).

Rebecca Hanson offers "three c's" for a healthy church. According to Hanson, healthy congregations have *communication* that is reciprocal, open and lacking in fear-based qualities such as judgmentalism and defensiveness. Likewise, health requires a system of *caring* in which all members feel supported and affirmed as people. *Control* dynamics are Hanson's third indicator of health. In healthy congregations, freedom of expression is promoted, questions are encouraged, and a minimum of secret keeping exists. Such openness of sharing requires a community with legitimate boundaries and respect for persons (1).

The Heart of a Healthy Body

The Bible speaks of the heart more than 600 times, suggesting that the hearts of people matter most to God. This is because the heart refers to the underlying motives and most deeply held convictions of a person or congregation. Yet, no one knows what lies in the heart of another person. Instead, we must look for external indicators of heart life. Relationships are key indicators. Treasure is another. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). The way in which people spend their treasures of money, time, and energy indicates what they hold dear in their hearts.

Prayer also reveals the heart. Roy King asserts, "The heart of the church is seen by looking at how the core prays" (4). To examine the content and character of prayer life in the congregation is to catch a glimpse of the heart attitudes of the people. King suggests five "sounds" of a healthy heartbeat in a congregation:

1. Leaders who love the people more than success, ideas, or visions.
2. Sacrificial love among the members as the defining quality of the congregation.
3. Fearless faith that motivates believers to love the unlovable.
4. Hope that creates optimism and resilience even in the face of opposition or persecution.
5. Flexibility that reflects humility and a teachable spirit.

Heart Attitudes in a Healthy Congregation

The premise of this study is that prayer changes the hearts of people and that people with transformed hearts are the foundation of a healthy church. In what ways does prayer change people? Only God knows what is in the heart of a person. We must rely on outward expressions of the innermost self to see evidence of change. The biblical witness points to many effects which prayer has on the human heart. These heart attitudes grow out of the three-fold movement of prayer: upward change, inward change, and outward change. This study identified a constellation of fifteen heart attitudes that prayer builds. Although the power of prayer works on individual hearts, God's power is multiplied at exponential levels when praying congregations begin to manifest these heart attitudes.

Dispositions of the Inward Movement of Prayer

The inward movement of prayer is the response to God's command to love yourself, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22: 39). Prayer shapes the human heart in the following ways:

1. *A pure heart.* "But the wisdom from above is first of all *pure* " (James 3:17).

Those who live with a pure heart manifest at least four related attitudes.

- a. *Living in the light* with nothing to hide and an absence of secret keeping.
- b. An *absence of ulterior motives* and double-mindedness.
- c. Consistent *character and integrity*, living with purity when no one is looking.
- d. *Innocent as doves* with an absence of flirtation with evil.

2. *A broken heart.* "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

Brokenheartedness is the awareness of one's sin and God's graciousness. As we come to depend upon God's mercy and provision, other attitudes emerge as well:

- a. *Humility* toward others and our ministries.
- b. A *forgiving spirit* that extends to others the same forgiveness we have received.
- c. *Confession* of our sins and accountability to the Body of Christ.
- d. A *teachable openness* to learn from mistakes and become more faithful.

3. *A fearless heart.* "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear"

(1 John 4:18). The fearless heart is characterized by:

- a. *Non-defensiveness* in interpersonal style, particularly in conflicted situations.
- b. *Openness* to new people and new ideas.
- c. *Flexibility* to try new approaches even if it is someone else's idea.
- d. *Courageous honesty* and forthrightness.

4. *The present heart.* "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things

shall be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow (Matthew 6:33,34).

The present heart is so focused upon one's relationship with God that living in the present is sufficient. The past and future lose their distracting power.

For those with a present heart, other related attitudes include:

- a. *Lack of worry* about the failures of the past or provision for the future.
- b. *A first-things-first* orientation.
- c. Celebration of the *present moment* as a gift from God.
- d. *Abundance orientation* as opposed to the negative anticipation of scarcity.

5. *The wise heart.* "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him (James 1:5,6).

Those with a wise heart are:

- a. *Shrewd as snakes*, especially in managing conflict in godly ways.
- b. *Discerning* of congregational matters with godly wisdom as opposed to worldly categories.
- c. *Self-controlled* in their dealings with others.
- d. *Visionary* as those who see God's vision for the church.

Dispositions of the Outward Movement of Prayer

In the second part of the Great Command, Jesus commands us to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:39). Outside of the Holy Spirit, our natural response is "Yes, Lord, I want to love my neighbor, but how?" The *outward movement* of prayer is a teaching from the Holy Spirit in how to love our neighbor from the heart. Through prayer, disciples grow in five outward-turned attitudes.

1. *The patient heart.* "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . patience" (Galatians 5:22). As God builds a patient heart within God's people, certain congregational characteristics become distinctive:
 - a. *A merciful spirit* in which we treat others with the mercy God has shown to us.

b. *An encouraging spirit* that permits risk and promotes growth.

c. *A waiting upon God* to act in God's time.

d. *A persistent spirit* that resists the urge to give up.

2. *The servant's heart.* "I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 31,32). Jesus supported Peter in prayer in part for Peter's sake, but also for the sake of the church. God's design is that spiritual awakening produces servanthood to the world.

Those with a servant's heart display:

a. *Eagerness* to serve God and their neighbor.

b. *Lack of presumption or arrogance.*

c. *Subjection* to God and the authorities placed over them.

d. *A "one another" orientation* in which they look for ways to serve others.

3. *A unified heart.* "I pray . . . that all of them may be one" (John 17:20, 21). Unity is a divine gift in a congregation that is supported by the following attitudes:

a. *Worshipping, praying, and working in one accord.*

b. *An absence of divisions and pettiness.*

c. *Mutual respect and love* among members.

d. *Freedom* to be different and to disagree.

4. *A generous heart.* "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well" (1 Thessalonians 2:8). As God softens hearts through prayer, patterns of generosity naturally appear in the form of:

a. *Lack of favoritism* within the congregational family.

b. *Gladness in giving* in which we experience that it is more blessed to give.

c. *Initiative driven by godly passion* to find ways to support God's work.

d. *Careful stewardship* of the people and monetary resources we have received.

5. *An evangelist's heart.* "Pray the Lord of the harvest that he may send out workers into the harvest field" (Matthew 9:38, KJV). As congregations agree with God in prayer to

become laborers in the harvest, God creates certain attitudes that equip us for evangelism, including:

- a. *A heart for lost people.*
- b. *Boldness* in sharing the gospel with our neighbors, friends, and co-workers.
- c. *Joy* in seeing lost people come to faith in Jesus Christ.
- d. *Initiative to take action* beyond the rhetoric about evangelism.

Dispositions of the Upward Movement of Prayer

All expressions of the Christian life are ultimately the outpouring of God's love. The deeper we grow in our knowledge and love of God, the more motivated and effective we will become in ministering to the world. This is the dynamic expressed in the Great Commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Luke 10:27). As the love of God increases in our hearts, the following attitudes give evidence to the world of our transformed lives:

1. *A loving heart.* "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). When congregations are growing to love God more through prayer, they also exhibit:
 - a. *Progressive deepening in love* for one another.
 - b. *Priority of relationships* over tasks in congregational life.
 - c. *Sacrificial service* to one another and the needs of the world.
 - d. *Lack of competitiveness* in favor of a spirit of cooperation.
2. *A faithful heart.* "Teach me your ways, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart" (Psalm 86:11). Out of faithful hearts proceed:
 - a. *Trustworthiness* that produces a climate of trust.
 - b. *Commitment* to God that creates a climate of reliability.
 - c. *Truthfulness* that creates a climate of openness.
 - d. *Confidence* in God that creates a climate of hope.
3. *A joyful heart.* "Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete" (John 16:24).

Congregations with a joyful heart experience:

- a. *Happiness* and the perception that their church is a happy place to be.
- b. *Humor* and the ability to laugh at themselves.
- c. *A sense of joy* even in difficult circumstances.
- d. *Enjoyment and enthusiasm* in the programs and activities of the church.

4. *A hungry heart*. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). In the same way that teenagers go through a season of insatiable hunger when they are in a growth spurt, the surest sign of spiritual growth is hunger and thirst for God (Cho Revival 5). Congregations with hungry hearts have:

- a. *A desire to pray* in which prayer becomes more than rhetoric or ritual.
 - b. *Leaders who lead by the example* of hunger for God in their own lives.
 - c. *An absence of apathy and complacency* within the core group.
 - d. *A growing atmosphere* in which a contagion of hunger for God spreads.
5. *A peaceful heart*. "In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds" (Philippians 4: 6,7). When congregations experience the peace of God through prayer, they exhibit:
- a. *A sense of peace* in worship and congregational gatherings.
 - b. *The presence of Jesus* in tangible ways.
 - c. *Lack of anxiety* in decisions and daily responsibilities.
 - d. *A burden to act as peacemakers* when conflict arises in the congregation or their community.

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Study

This study probes the connection between prayer and the health of a congregation in terms of the change of heart that God works through prayer. The basic presupposition is that change of heart appears as a change in the enduring heart attitudes of an individual or a community. From the point of view of human psychology, trait-level characteristics such as heart attitudes tend to resist change. The literature review offered a more hopeful perspective from the biblical witness and a host of spiritual writers. The collective voice of the historic faith community is that we are new creations in Jesus Christ. Persons who are made new in Christ experience a life-long process of transformation through the “renewing of (their) minds” (Romans 12:2).

Congregational health is more a matter of opening our hearts to this transformation process than the attainment of external milestones. Can the hypothesis that prayer produces interior transformation in a congregation be methodically observed and described? More precisely, the operational question for this study is: Can a connection between prayer and change of heart in terms of the upward, inward, and outward directed attitudes of a congregation be observed, described, and documented?

Church leaders at all levels search for the right combination of organizational strategies, discipleship techniques, and evangelism programs that will produce a great church. The majority of pastors have been trained to think of ministry in success categories where success depends upon the competent performance of the leaders. As such, the prevailing church growth models emphasize doing the right things at the right time to build a healthy church.

Little evidence exists in the biblical record that leaders of the early church spent a lot of energy contemplating how the church could succeed. Success per se was viewed as a given where the Holy Spirit was working. These ordinary people through whom God did extraordinary things focused on prayer. Prayer served the early church as the channel through which the Holy Spirit flowed to create a community of unequalled love and incredible power. The first century church prayed and the church growth for which today's leaders yearn flowed in a natural way. Early church leaders understood that they were not called to activist ministries but to a relationship with Jesus Christ expressed in obedience and eagerness to draw others into relationship with Christ.

Church health is the natural by-product of a community that abides in God. More precisely, church health is the corporate expression of our transformed lives in Christ. As a congregation grows in knowledge and love of God, the patterns of selfishness and fear that have created sick relationships fall away. What are left in their place are attitudes of the heart that reflect the character of God. The premise of this study is that churches that pray are formed into the image of God through communion with God. As Foster puts it, "to pray is to change" (12).

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine and describe the impact of a forty-day season of prayer on Murray Hill United Methodist Church in terms of change in upward, inward, and outward directed attitudes. The following assumptions undergirded this project:

1. The vitality of the church depends upon the activity of the Holy Spirit.

2. Prayer is the God-given means for connecting the life of the church to the heart of God.
3. The practice of congregational prayer requires intentional focus, teaching, and effort on the part of church leadership.
4. Prayer produces visible, describable change in individuals and faith communities.
5. Church health is “twice created,” first in the heart and then in the life of the church (Covey 146).

Metanoia was designed to have maximum impact on the broadest cross-section of Murray Hill United Methodist Church. As noted earlier, the choice of a forty-day period for this project stood in continuity with biblical seasons of prayer that led to change of heart. The decision to use intact groups rather than focusing the study on a single, tightly controlled experimental group was driven by the desire to involve as many people as possible in the prayer project. *Metanoia* soaked the congregation in prayer by exposing them to 103 different opportunities to participate in prayer. This study encouraged the congregation to focus on prayer in every element of the on-going life of the church.

By employing multiple elements of prayer, *Metanoia* sought to create a synergism of prayer in which the total effect of the project was greater than the sum of the parts. This study was designed to balance structured and fluid dynamics in a way that left room for the Holy Spirit. At its core, *Metanoia* was an exercise in listening more carefully to God in the context of the on-going life of the church.

The Research Question

This study focused on a single research question:

What impact, if any, did a forty-day season of prayer conducted in the context of intact groups have on congregational heart attitudes of Murray Hill United Methodist Church as measured by the Church Heart Exam?

Several component questions supported this research question:

1. Was a forty-day period of sufficient duration to effect depth change in congregational attitudes? The selection of a forty-day duration for the study relied both on biblical precedents and behavioral psychology related to habit formation. Darden's research with more than 5,000 subjects in weight loss and exercise programs indicated that behaviors are habituated over a thirty-day period (12).
2. Did increased attention to prayer produce significant shifts in attitudes toward prayer and in the way people pray? This question related to the desire to pray and issues of fervency in prayer. If *Metanoia* produced lasting benefits in the prayer life of the congregation, the dynamic of desire was critical. Key indicators on the Church Heart Exam of the desire to pray included:
 - a. Broken Heart (items 13, 16, 19, 22).
 - b. Present Heart (items 37, 40, 42, 46).
 - c. Unified Heart (items 27, 30, 33, 36).
 - d. Hungry Heart (items 38, 41, 44, 47).
 - e. Evangelist's Heart (items 51, 54, 57, 60).
3. Did the sixty items that comprise the Church Heart Exam correspond with upward, inward, and outward heart attitudes? This is a construct reliability question that was difficult to answer. As detailed in Chapter 2, the Church Heart Exam drew upon the Great Commandment (Luke 10:27) for the three-fold movement of the spiritual life.

The assignment of an item to the upward, inward, or outward subscale was an intuitive process based on scriptural precedents.

4. Did the fruit of change of heart from *Metanoia* appear immediately or is the change process more subtle and prolonged? The Church Heart Exam was designed to elicit perceptions of congregational heart attitudes. The expectation was that respondents would perceive the beginning stages of change that might grow to fruition over time.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included the membership of Murray Hill United Methodist Church, a congregation of 516 persons founded in 1926 in Jacksonville, Florida. Murray Hill United Methodist Church is a predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon congregation with a mean age of sixty-two. Although all age groups are represented in the church, the dominant group is over fifty-five years of age. Most of these people are long-term members of the church (twenty or more years).

The population may be further described in terms of intact groups that participated in *Metanoia*. Participating intact groups included:

1. The Wednesday night Bible study, a pastor-led seminar averaging fifty persons.
2. Sunday School classes including ten adult classes, five graded classes for children, and two youth classes. Average Sunday School attendance is 249.
3. Sunday morning worship services at 8:30am and 11:00am averaging 275 in attendance.

4. Youth ministry, including junior and senior high ministries on Sunday afternoon and Wednesday nights averaging twenty in attendance.
5. United Methodist Women including three monthly circles with a membership of seventy-eight women.
6. United Methodist Men with an average attendance of forty men at monthly meetings.
7. Disciple Bible study which meets on Tuesday night with seventeen members.
8. Aaron and Hur Society, a prayer partner ministry including forty-seven persons who serve as prayer partners to the pastor.
9. Men's and women's weekly prayer groups with average attendance of five persons in each group.
10. Sunday evening services (6:00pm) with average attendance of sixty persons.

The sample of experimental subjects from this larger pool consisted of 104 members systematically selected from the church roll. These persons were contacted by mail and asked to complete the pretest Church Heart Exam during the week of September 12, 1999. The same sample of experimental subjects received a follow-up mailing during the week of November 7, 1999 with the request to complete the Church Heart Exam and Involvement Questionnaire on a posttest basis. A control group of 100 persons from St. Luke United Methodist Church, a 1,500 member congregation in Lexington, Kentucky, completed the Church Heart Exam at the same times.

Methodology

Metanoia was a quasi-experimental study that utilized a pretest-posttest, non-equivalent control group design. This design provided strong internal validity for a study

that relied upon intact groups. Because *Metanoia* was an immersion experience in prayer that relied upon multiple programs, biases related to confounding variables were possible. The on-going life of the church includes many concurrent dynamics and forces that interact in complex ways. In other words, many factors other than prayer could have led to shifts in heart attitudes. The use of a control group from another United Methodist church controlled for some biases related to intervening variables. Although the entire membership of Murray Hill United Methodist Church was invited to take part in *Metanoia*, data analysis for the study relied exclusively upon the randomly selected data pool. The use of random subjects was another hedge against biases that might have arisen from the use of intact groups.

Intact groups of the church were invited to make prayer a priority in their programs and ministries for a forty-day season. *Metanoia* provided the church with five tools to build prayer life in the congregation:

- A. A school of prayer through the Sunday School and Wednesday night Bible Study.
- B. A call to personal commitment to prayer.
- C. Prayer emphasis in worship services.
- D. Intercession through prayer partners and intact groups.
- E. Prayer events.

Pre-Study Methodology

August 31 through September 11, 1999:

1. Pilot testing of the Church Heart Exam was conducted on August 31, 1999 with

members of the Congregational Reflection Group (CRG) serving as the pilot group. Eight persons completed the Church Heart Exam and participated in a discussion to identify ambiguous or confusing items in the test. Participants suggested that the wording of items 3, 34, and 43 be revised to positive statements for consistency sake and to minimize scoring errors.

2. Prayer partners and Congregational Reflection Group participated in intercessory prayer for *Metanoia* on September 4, 1999.
3. A Newsletter article and bulletin announcements were published to raise awareness in the congregation about *Metanoia*.
- 4.. A training session for Sunday school teachers and small group leaders was held on September 9, 1999 with eleven teachers in attendance. The training syllabus is found in Appendix C.

Week of September 12, 1999:

1. Performed systematic sampling of the church roll to identify experimental group members. Every fifth name on the roll was selected. A total of 103 questionnaires were mailed.
2. Mailed Church Heart Exam to control group subjects. The control group consisted of 100 members of St. Luke United Methodist Church in Lexington, Kentucky.
3. Trained youth leaders for Jericho Walk. The training session was held on September 23 and was attended by the youth director and three volunteer youth counselors.

Conduct of the Study

Metanoia began with a call to prayer in the Sunday morning services on September 26, 1999 and concluded with a victory celebration on Sunday night, November 7, 1999. Over the course of these six weeks, the congregation participated in 103 programs, ministries, and events related to *Metanoia*. The intent was to provide multiple opportunities for involvement that invited everyone to participate in some manner.

The School of Prayer

The School of Prayer focused upon upward, inward, and outward movements of prayer through pastor-led training at the Wednesday night Bible study and lay teaching in Sunday school classes and the youth ministry. Teachers used a researcher-designed curriculum that combined emphases on the biblical foundations of prayer with instruction in how to pray. For the Sunday School of Prayer, Maxwell's *Partners in Prayer* was the basic text. The teaching curriculum included:

1. Week 1, September 26: Unleashing the Potential of Prayer (1-12), Outward.
2. Week 2, October 3: Adjusting Our Attitudes About Prayer (13-30), Upward.
3. Week 3, October 10: Developing Practical Prayer Skills (31-40), Inward.
4. Week 4, October 17: Avoiding Personal Prayer Killers (51-64), Inward.
5. Week 5, October 24: Intercession: How to Pray for Others (65-76), Outward.
6. Week 6, October 31, Protecting and Partnering With Your Pastor (77-92),
Outward.
7. Week 7, November 7: Praying Your Church to Its Potential (93-108) Upward.

Sunday school teachers were provided copies of the textbook and researcher-designed teaching outlines.

The Wednesday night School of Prayer used *Prayer* by Foster as the teaching text. The weekly curriculum included:

1. September 29, Anybody Can Pray Like This (7-16),
Focus: Simple prayer, inward movement.
2. October 6: Growing Seeds of Prayer in Your Life (57-66), Focus: Formation
prayer, inward movement.
3. October 20: Praying in the Name of Jesus (191-202), Focus: Intercessory prayer,
outward movement.
4. October 27: The Prayer of Relinquishment (47-56), Focus: Surrendering of the
will, inward movement.
5. Week of November 2: Prayer of the Heart (131-142), Focus: Turning the heart
toward God, upward focused.

Researcher-designed teaching outlines served as the weekly teaching format. Copies of these outlines are found in Appendix D.

The Call to Personal Commitment to Prayer

Members of the church were urged to personally commit to intercessory prayer during *Metanoia*. General announcements about the call to prayer appeared in the monthly newsletter and weekly worship bulletins. Members were furnished a prayer commitment card in the Sunday morning service on September 26. The commitment card was a tear-off card designed for participants to place half of their card on the altar as

a dedication to God and to keep half as a reminder to pray. 109 persons left prayer cards on the altar.

The personal commitment to prayer also included a prayer partner component. Members of the Aaron and Hur Society prayed with the pastor before worship services. Sunday school class members selected prayer partners on September 26 and prayed together for the forty-day period.

On October 3 and November 7 the congregation participated in "One on One" altar ministry as a part of Holy Communion. As they came to the altar for communion, congregants had the opportunity to take a slip of paper from a basket containing the names, addresses, and phone numbers of members. Participants prayed daily for the person whose name had been drawn.

Intercessory Prayer

A number of intact groups prayed for the Holy Spirit to move during *Metanoia*. A weekly list of prayer needs of the church appeared in the bulletin and served as the focus for intercessory prayer. Those who served as intercessors included:

- The Administrative Board and Council on Ministries
- Men's and women's prayer groups
- Aaron and Hur Society
- Sunday school classes
- United Methodist Women
- United Methodist Men
- Disciple Bible study group
- Youth group

Prayer Emphasis in Worship Services

The Sunday morning service on September 26 served as a call to prayer to initiate *Metanoia*. Weekly teaching messages in worship focused on the following aspects of prayer:

1. September 26 morning service: How to Build a House of Prayer, (Mark 11:11-19), upward movement.
2. October 3 evening service: Forgiveness and Prayer, Focus: outward/upward movement.
3. October 17 evening service: On a Mission from God, Focus: Evangelism and prayer, outward movement.
4. October 24 evening service: Praying with Authority, Focus: Spiritual Warfare, outward movement.
5. October 31 evening service: Healing and Prayer, Focus: Healing, outward movement.
6. November 7 morning service, How To Keep Our First Love In First Place, (Revelation 2:1-7), upward/inward movement.
7. November 7 evening service, An Anatomy of Spiritual Awakening, (Zechariah 8:18-23), Focus: Revival, upward movement (Bryant 31-38).

Congregants were provided teaching outlines for each of these messages. Copies of the outlines are found in Appendix C.

Each worship service included a time after the message to respond to God's word. The invitation to prayerful response followed Vander Griend's model of response with adoration of the attributes of God, awakening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and

attention to the coming of the Kingdom (51). At the end of the services, congregants were invited to come to the altar for prayer for conversion, spiritual awakening, healing, and personal needs.

Prayer Events

Metanoia included prayer events to build excitement, interest, and anticipation in the congregation. Prayer events involved persons who were not regular attenders of Sunday school or worship services. A variety of events were offered to appeal to a wide range of ages and tastes.

On Sunday afternoon, September 26, a Jericho Walk was sponsored by youth members of the church. This prayer walk was an act of spiritual warfare in keeping with the story of Joshua's victory over Jericho in Joshua 6:1-20. In the Jericho Walk participants engaged in silent prayer while circling the perimeter of the church seven times. As they walked, they prayed for a list of church needs provided to them. The walk concluded with a time of shouting, singing, and celebrating God's victory over forces of spiritual oppression (Vander Griend 210).

Following the Jericho Walk, the September 26 evening service was a Concert of Prayer. Concert of Prayer refers to a season of prayer that is "concerted," a time of pleading with the Lord with earnestness and urgency. After a time of praise and worship, the Concert of Prayer included a message on the power of prayer in one accord. The congregation was then invited to pray together for spiritual awakening and revival during *Metanoia*. (Bryant 39-40).

To prepare the Israelites for the return of the Ark of the Covenant, Samuel called the people to observe a solemn assembly. The solemn assembly involved fasting for a

day spent in confessing sins to the Lord. When they gathered before the Lord, the Israelites asked God to receive them back as God's people and to protect them from their enemies (I Samuel 7:5,6).

On October 3 the congregation was invited to a solemn assembly in the form of a service of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Sunday evening service included teaching on forgiveness and prayer followed by an invitation to altar prayer for healing of relationships. The prayer time in the service was participatory, inviting congregants to offer prayer for forgiveness and reconciliation in the congregation, in personal relationships, and in the community (Vander Griend 205).

On October 30 and 31 Murray Hill United Methodist Church hosted the Broken Vessels prayer and praise team from Pine Forest United Methodist church in Pensacola, Florida. This team of youth and adults (thirty-one persons) led a weekend of seminars, worship experiences, and spiritual counseling focused on building a house of prayer.

Scheduled events included:

Saturday, October 30, 1999:

1. Morning seminars on developing intercessory prayer ministry.
2. Afternoon outreach to neighborhood children and fall festival.
3. Evening praise and worship service.

Sunday, October 31, 1999:

Broken Vessels led both morning worship services with praise and personal testimonies about the awakening God has brought to Pine Forest United Methodist Church through prayer. The ministry of Broken Vessels was a novel experience for the Murray Hill United Methodist congregation. Murray Hill is a traditional church with no

praise and worship services or experience in these forms of worship. Broken Vessels was received warmly with capacity crowds in attendance (320 persons).

A twenty-four hour prayer vigil was held on Saturday, November 6 and Sunday, November 7. Members signed up to pray in the sanctuary or in their homes in one-hour time slots. A minimum of two persons was present throughout the twenty-four hour period. Members of the Aaron and Hur Society organized and led the prayer vigil.

On the evening of November 7 a victory celebration gave the congregation an opportunity to count their blessings in a service focused on answered prayer. At this time members gave feedback about the impact that *Metanoia* had on their lives in the form of reports of answered prayer. With the permission of congregants these praise reports were published in the monthly newsletter. Appendix H includes a list of answered prayers as published in the newsletter.

In addition to the celebration service, congregants were invited to evaluate the impact of *Metanoia* using the *Metanoia* Feedback Form (See Appendix H). Feedback forms were distributed at Sunday morning services on November 7 and 14. The intent of this evaluation component was to discern how and whether the congregation wanted to continue the prayer emphasis rather than permitting it to end with the completion of *Metanoia*. The evaluation component sought to ask:

1. What have we learned about prayer during these forty days that we need to continue?
2. What have we learned about ourselves that we need to continue to explore in prayer?
3. What is God blessing in prayer that we need to continue doing?

Post-Study Methodology

A focus group met on December 5, 1999 to give congregants an opportunity for feedback and to share the vision for how this prayer initiative should continue. Three recommendations came from the focus group:

- A. That a church-wide intercessory prayer chain be established as soon as possible. Members of the Aaron and Hur Society volunteered to lead this effort.
- B. That the church hold prayer vigils at least twice a year. The suggestion was made for a prayer vigil during Holy Week.
- C. That a forty-day season of prayer be observed annually toward the goal of revival in the church.

The Council on Ministries agreed to oversee the implementation of recommendations B and C.

During the week of November 7 experimental group subjects were mailed the Church Heart Exam and Involvement Questionnaire with a cover letter explaining the need for posttest data and asking for their cooperation (See Appendix A). Members of the control group were mailed the Church Heart Exam at the same time. Follow-up calls to encourage return of the questionnaires were made to the experimental and control group ten days after the mailing.

Instrumentation

The Church Heart Exam is a researcher-designed, sixty item questionnaire that was intended to elicit perceptions regarding fifteen heart attitudes. The fifteen heart attitudes described in detail in Chapter 2 are manifestations of the upward, inward, and

outward directed movements of prayer. This study correlated five heart attitudes with each of the three movements of prayer. The Church Heart Exam tested each of the fifteen core attitudes in terms of four related dispositions, yielding a constellation of sixty items.

The sixty items that comprise the Church Heart Exam are descriptive statements that point indirectly to a behavior, situation, or priority in the church that reflects a heart attitude. The wording and ordering of test items were designed to minimize "right answer" responses. The sixty items include twenty statements related to each of the three movements of prayer. Tables 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 illustrate the item structure of the Church Heart Exam.

Inward-Directed Attitudes

Table 3-1

Pure Heart	Broken Heart	Fearless Heart	Present Heart	Wise Heart
Item #1 Living in the Light	Item # 13 Humility	Item #25 Non-defensive	Item #37 Lack of Worry	Item #49 Shrewdness
Item #4 Single-Minded	Item # 16 Forgiving	Item #28 Openness	Item #40 First things first	Item #52 Discernment
Item #7 Integrity	Item #19 Confession	Item #31 Flexibility	Item #42 Present	Item # 55 Self-control
Item # 10 Innocence	Item #22 Teachability	Item #34 Courage	Item #46 Optimistic	Item #58 Visionary

Upward-Directed Attitudes

Table 3-2

Loving Heart	Faithful Heart	Joyful Heart	Hungry Heart	Peaceful Heart
Item #2 Progressive love	Item # 14 Trustworthiness	Item # 26 Happiness	Item # 38 Desire to pray	Item # 50 Sense of peace
Item # 5 Priority on love	Item # 17 Commitment	Item # 29 Humor	Item # 41 Lead by example	Item # 53 Spirit of Christ
Item # 8 Sacrificial spirit	Item # 20 Truthfulness	Item # 32 Sense of Joy	Item #43 Conscientiousness	Item # 56 Lack of anxiety
Item # 11 Cooperative	Item # 23 Confidence	Item # 35 Enthusiasm	Item # 47 Growth Oriented	Item # 59 Peacemakers

Outward-Directed Attitudes

Table 3-3

Patient Heart	Servant's Heart	Unified Heart	Generous Heart	Evangelist's Heart
Item # 3 Merciful	Item # 15 Eagerness	Item # 27 In one accord	Item # 39 Lack of favoritism	Item # 51 Heart for lost people
Item # 6 Encouragement	Item # 18 Unassuming	Item # 30 Lack of pettiness	Item # 44 Gladness to give	Item # 54 Boldness
Item # 9 Waiting on God	Item # 21 Submissiveness	Item # 33 Mutual respect	Item # 45 Initiative to help	Item # 57 Joy in sharing faith
Item # 12 Persistent	Item # 24 One another	Item # 36 Free spirit	Item # 48 Stewardship	Item # 60 Initiative to share

The Church Heart Exam used a five-point Likert Scale for scoring where 1 represented “very little” and 5 represented “very much.” A copy of the Church Heart Exam is found in Appendix A.

The study employed a researcher-designed Involvement Questionnaire to correlate degree of involvement in *Metanoia* with scores on the Church Heart Exam. The experimental group was asked to rate their involvement in *Metanoia* on a 1 to 5 Likert scale grid. The ten items that comprised the Involvement Questionnaire included involvement in the five areas of prayer emphasis that made up *Metanoia*. On this instrument, 1 represented “very little” and 5 represented “quite a lot.” Table 3-4 illustrates the item content of the Involvement Questionnaire.

The Involvement Questionnaire enhanced internal validity of the study by providing a basis of comparison of subjects who were relatively more involved to those who were less involved in *Metanoia*. The question behind this part of the inquiry was: Did those who were more involved in *Metanoia* perceive heart attitudes differently from

subjects who were less involved or not involved at all? A copy of the Involvement Questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Involvement Questionnaire Item Analysis
Table 3-4

School of Prayer	Intercessory Prayer	Prayer in worship	Personal prayer commitment	Prayer Events
Item # 1 Wednesday Night Study	Item # 3 Prayer partners	Item # 4 Sunday morning worship	Item # 5 Personal Commitment	Item # 7 Jericho Walk
Item # 2 Sunday School	Item # 6 Weekly prayer groups	Item # 8 Sunday evening services		Item # 9 Broken Vessels
				Item# 10 Prayer vigil

Data Collection

For purposes of this study, the principle sources of data were experimental and control group responses to the Church Heart Exam and experimental group responses to the Involvement Questionnaire. All data were collected by mail and hand-sorted to match respondents by name. Only subjects who completed both pretest and posttest questionnaires became a part of the research data pool. Forty-four persons responded from the mailing to the experimental group yielding twenty-two matched sets of questionnaires. Thirty-nine persons responded to the control group mailing yielding eighteen matched sets of questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Data analysis focused upon analysis and comparison of experimental and control group responses to the Church Heart Exam and the Involvement Questionnaire. Analysis included:

1. Comparison of posttest means of experimental and control groups on a per item basis using *t*-tests for significance.
2. Comparison on an overall basis of posttest means of experimental and control groups by performing analysis of covariance.
3. Testing of the correlation between involvement in *Metanoia* and Church Heart Exam scores employing the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.
4. Reliability testing on the Church Heart Exam to determine internal consistency.

These statistical procedures are detailed at length in Chapter 4.

Data analysis was conducted with the assistance of the Division of Educational Research at the University of North Florida. Raw data were inputted into MicroSoft Excel spreadsheets and analyzed with the use of SPSS statistical software.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

This study focused upon a single research question:

What impact, if any, did a forty-day season of prayer conducted in the context of intact groups have on congregational heart attitudes of the Murray Hill United Methodist Church as measured by the Church Heart Exam?

To answer this question, the Church Heart Exam was administered on a pretest and posttest basis to 104 randomly selected subjects at Murray Hill United Methodist Church and to 100 control group respondents from St. Luke United Methodist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Analysis of data focused on several component questions:

1. On a per item basis was there a significant difference in Church Heart Exam pretest and posttest scores between the control and experimental groups?
2. When comparing test scores on inward, upward, and outward subscales, was there a significant difference between control and experimental groups?
3. Were there significant differences between control and experimental groups in overall test scores on the Church Heart Exam?
4. Was degree of involvement in the programs and events of *Metanoia* a significant factor in experimental group scores?

Profile of Subjects

Pretest and posttest copies of the Church Heart Exam were mailed to 104 members of Murray Hill United Methodist Church with a cover letter explaining the nature of the research and requesting their cooperation. A similar procedure was

followed in contacting 100 control group subjects from St. Luke United Methodist Church. From the experimental group pool, forty-two persons returned pretest questionnaires and forty-one persons returned posttest questionnaires. From the control group, thirty-nine pretest and thirty-six posttest questionnaires were returned. Three questionnaires in the experimental group were returned blank with a note. After compilation of data, the experimental group data pool consisted of twenty-two persons who completed both pretest and posttest questionnaires. Eighteen control group subjects completed both questionnaires and served in the data pool.

Table 4-1 illustrates a demographic profile of experimental and control group subjects.

Table 4-1 Respondent Demographics

DEMOGRAPHICS	EXPERIMENTAL (N=22)	CONTROL (N=18)
Male	4	8
Female	18	10
Mean Age	69	43
Caucasian	21	17
Other Ethnicities	1	2

As indicated in this demographic profile, the experimental group was significantly gender biased with eighty-two percent female subjects compared to the control group which was more evenly balanced (forty-five percent male and fifty-five percent female). The mean age of the experimental group was sixty-nine years of age compared with forty-three years of age in the control group. In both groups the heavy concentration of

subjects from a single ethnic group (Caucasian, English speaking) limited the generalizability of the study.

Reliability Issues

The Church Heart Exam is a researcher-designed instrument that consists of three subscales: inward, upward, and outward directed attitudes. Although the development of the Church Heart Exam was based on research detailed in Chapter 2, the reliability of the instrument remained a question mark. Data were analyzed on a per item basis for¹ internal consistency utilizing the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. All items on the Church Heart Exam fell within the .92 range of reliability. Table 4-2 illustrates reliability coefficients for inward, upward, and outward subscales and for the involvement scale.

Table 4-2 Internal Reliability Analysis of the Church Heart Exam

	INWARD	UPWARD	OUTWARD	INVOLVEMENT
N of cases	57	59	63	12
Alpha range	.94-.95	.92-.93	.93-.94	.76-.83
Overall alpha	.94	.93	.94	.83

These alpha scores indicate a high degree of internal reliability for the Church Heart Exam, particularly when compared with reliability coefficients for personality tests or other tests that attempt to assess the affective domain. On such instruments, coefficients in the .75 range are not uncommon (Wiersma 273). The lower alpha scores on the

¹ Cronbach alpha is a statistical procedure for measuring internal consistency by assigning a numerical value to the impact of an item on the scale mean. This procedure yields a reliability coefficient referred to as "alpha."

involvement scale may be attributed to the smaller sample of respondents completing the involvement questionnaire and the much greater variance in responses.

Analysis of Test Items

Each of the sixty items on the Church Heart Exam was analyzed to compare the shift in heart attitudes from pretest to posttest in the experimental group as compared to the control group. Mean scores of the two groups were compared using a two-tailed *t*-test with statistical significance at the .05 level². Sixteen of the items on the Church Heart Exam yielded statistically significant scores. In Table 4-3 the significant items are displayed according to inward, upward, and outward sub-scales. As detailed below, all three subscales included items with significant *t*-scores. The greatest degree of change in heart attitudes fell in the upward subscale with eight items. Six significant items in the outward subscale and two items from the inward subscale showed significant change from pretest to posttest scores.

The Church Heart Exam measured fifteen heart attitudes related to upward, inward, and outward directed dispositions. Items related to the joyful heart, peaceful heart, and evangelist's heart showed significant change from pretest to posttest scores. In comparison to the control group, the experimental group changed significantly in half of the items related to joyful heart (#32, sense of joy and # 35, enthusiasm).

The experimental group showed significant scores on all items related to peaceful heart: Item 50 (sense of peace), Item 53 (presence of Jesus), Item 56 (lack of anxiety), and Item 59 (peacemakers). On the outward subscale, the attitude that showed the most change was the evangelist's heart where every item related to this attitude reflected a

² The *t* test is "used to determine whether two means, proportions, or correlation coefficients differ significantly from each other" (Borg and Gall 428).

significant t-score. These items included: Item 51(heart for lost people), Item 54 (boldness in witnessing), Item 57(joy in seeing others come to Christ), Item 60 (initiative in evangelism).

Table 4-3
Comparison of Changes in Mean of Experimental and Control Groups
(Statistically Significant Items Only)

ITEM	N	Mean Difference	Two-tail (p) Significance	SUBSCALE
#5 Loving one another is a priority.	38	.54	.03*	Upward
#15 The members of my church are eager to serve God.	37	.54	.03*	Outward
#25 Our members are eager to learn and grow.	37	.82	.003**	Inward
#32 Our worship is a joy-filled experience.	37	.97	.001**	Upward
#35 We look forward to church events.	40	.58	.02*	Upward
#43 Most people are enthusiastic and involved.	40	.80	.01*	Upward
#44 We are glad to support God's work.	40	.59	.03*	Outward
#46 We are excited about the present.	38	.87	.001**	Inward
#50 People feel a sense of peace in our church.	40	.64	.02*	Upward
#51 Our members invite lost people to church.	36	.79	.04*	Outward
#53 People experience the presence of Christ here.	37	.85	.001**	Upward
#54 Our members share Christ boldly with others.	37	.85	.02*	Outward
#56 Our congregation is mostly anxiety-free.	36	.72	.008**	Upward
#57 We have a spirit of joy.	38	.78	.003**	Outward
#59 Our church is a peacemaker in the community.	34	.94	.01*	Upward
#60 Our church works at evangelism.	37	1.20	.009**	Outward

*p is less than .05, two-tailed significance.

**p is less than .01, two-tailed significance.

One-Shot Analysis of the Entire Scale

An analysis of covariance was performed to determine the aggregate relationships of the mean scores of experimental and control group subjects.³ Each subscale (Inward, Upward, and Outward) was analyzed using the pretest means as the co-variate. The posttest mean of the experimental group was the dependent variable for this analysis. Using a .05 level of significance, the overall comparison of Church Heart Exam means showed no significant difference between the two groups (Significance of $f=.08$). However, f scores for the upward subscale were statistically significant (Significance of $f=.01$). These numbers indicated that those persons who took part in the forty-day season of prayer changed significantly in upward directed heart attitudes as compared to subjects who did not take part. Table 4-4 below details the overall comparison of experimental and control group means per analysis of covariance.

Comparison of Adjusted Post-test Means for Experimental and Control Groups
Table 4-4

SUBSCALE	N	Regression coefficient	f	Significance of f
Upward	40	.84	7.54	.01*
Inward	40	.81	2.64	.12
Outward	40	.85	2.89	.10
OVERALL	40	.83	4.36	.08

* $f=.01$ significance level.

Analysis of the Involvement Questionnaire

A key question for data analysis was whether degree of involvement in the activities, training, and events of *Metanoia* had any effect on Church Heart Exam scores of experimental group subjects. To answer this question, correlation testing was

³ The analysis of covariance is a "method of statistical control through which scores on the dependent variable are adjusted according to a related variable" (Wiersma 463).

performed utilizing the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r).⁴ These r scores range from +1 (representing a perfect, positive correlation) to -1 (representing a perfect negative correlation). Findings indicated that the subscales of the Church Heart Exam have strong positive correlations among them. Correlations among the subscales all exceeded the .05 level of significance.

However, when scores on the ten-item Involvement Questionnaire were correlated with subscales of the Church Heart Exam, the correlation was much weaker. Only in the relationship of involvement to upward scale items was the correlation statistically significant. In other words, a subject's score on the Involvement Questionnaire did not seem to correlate with scores on the Church Heart Exam. Table 4-5 further illustrates these findings.

Table 4-5
Correlations Between Involvement and Church Heart Exam Subscales

	Involvement	Upward	Inward	Outward
Involvement	$r=1.00$	$r=.05$	$r=-.0$	$r=.05$
Upward	$r=.047^*$	$r=1.00$	$r=.97$	$r=.98$
Inward	$r=-.08$	$r=.97^*$	$r=1.00$	$r=.96$
Outward	$r=.05$	$r=.98^*$	$r=.96^*$	$r=1.00$

*Statistically significant

Intervening Variables

As noted earlier, experimental and control groups were not comparable in terms of gender and age demographics. The experimental group ($n=22$) included only four men compared to the control group that was more balanced (45 percent men, 55 percent women). Likewise, the two groups differed in mean age by twenty-six years. These differences may account in some way for the degree of change in heart attitudes as

⁴ The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient is a numerical representation of the degree of relationship between two variables. If the variables change in the same direction, the correlation is described as positive. If the variable changes in opposite directions, the correlation is negative.

measured by the Church Heart Exam. Comparison of test scores between men and women and by age group was not performed as a part of this study.

Issues Related to the Research Question

Chapter 3 detailed several issues related to the research question that analysis of data might address. Was a forty-day season of prayer of sufficient duration to produce significant change in heart attitudes? The analysis of covariance indicated that overall those persons who participated in *Metanoia* did not differ significantly from those who did not take part. However, on a subscale basis, experimental group subjects demonstrated significantly higher scores in the heart attitudes related to the upward movement of prayer. When the data were analyzed on a per item basis, experimental group scores showed significant difference on sixteen out of a total sixty items (twenty-seven percent of items). This level of difference would exceed differences that might be explained by chance or coincidence.

A second related question asked: Did those who took part in *Metanoia* experience significant shifts in the manner in which they prayed and in the desire to pray? The following Church Heart Exam items addressed issues of fervency and desire to pray:

1. broken heart (13, 16, 19, 22).
2. present heart (37, 40, 42, 46).
3. unified heart (27, 30, 33, 36).
4. hungry heart (38, 41, 43, 47).
5. evangelist's heart (51, 54, 57, 60).

Of these twenty items, six items showed significant levels of change, including the entire cluster related to evangelist's heart. Although these are noteworthy findings, especially

the degree of change related to a heart for evangelism, the data were inconclusive regarding issues of fervency and desire to pray.

Did the items on the Church Heart Exam measure what they purported to measure? This study did not include a construct reliability analysis. However, the strong internal reliability scores ($\alpha=.936$) suggest that the Church Heart Exam showed strong reliability.

Did the forty-day season of prayer show immediate fruit of change in heart attitudes or was the affect more subtle and prolonged? Again, the overall comparison of experimental and control groups showed no significant difference in mean test scores. Some level of change of heart was indicated on the upward subscale and items related to the Peaceful Heart and the Evangelist's Heart where the experimental group scored significantly higher on every related item. The meaning of these test scores is inconclusive. However, this data might be interpreted to represent a kind of "first fruit" of broader change of heart attitudes that will appear over time.

Summary of Significant Findings

1. Significant, positive change was observed on the upward subscale with forty percent of upward scale items yielding a significant difference.
2. Experimental group showed significant, positive change on all items related to The peaceful heart (one of five heart attitudes on the upward subscale).
3. Experimental group demonstrated significant, positive change on all items related to the evangelist's heart (one of five heart attitudes on the outward subscale).

4. Twenty-seven percent of Church Heart Exam items yielded significant *t*-scores comparing posttest means of the experimental and control groups. Although an overall comparison of posttest means yielded no significant difference, the percentage of significant test items exceeded chance levels.
5. A strong, positive correlation existed between the inward, upward, and outward subscales of the Church Heart Exam. However, the correlation between scores on the Involvement Questionnaire and the Church Heart Exam was much weaker. This suggests that level of involvement was not a significant factor in experimental group scores on the Church Heart Exam.

***Metanoia* Feedback Forms**

The congregation was invited during the two week period after *Metanoia* to provide their opinions and subjective impressions regarding the impact that the season of prayer had on them and Murray Hill United Methodist Church. A researcher-designed tool, the *Metanoia* Feedback Form, was used to collect this qualitative data. *Metanoia* Feedback Form was structured as a fifteen-item evaluation that employed a six-point Likert scale response scale where 1 represented "very little," 5 represented "very much," and 6 was "not applicable." *Metanoia* Feedback Form was intended to gather the following qualitative information:

1. Degree of perceived benefit from each of the five component elements of *Metanoia* (prayer in worship, prayer events, school of prayer, intercession, and personal prayer commitment).

2. Degree of interest in taking the "next step" in developing more prayer ministries at Murray Hill United Methodist Church.
3. Anecdotal reports of change of heart or answered prayer that came through *Metanoia*.

The ushers at Sunday morning services distributed Metanoia Feedback Forms on November 7 and November 14, 1999. Fourteen persons provided feedback. Responses across all items ranged across the Likert scale, but two items were significantly positive:

- A. Item 1, "I enjoyed the Sunday school lessons on prayer." All respondents rated this item as a "5" with the exception of one person who did not participate in Sunday school and indicated "not applicable."
- B. Item 15, "I feel closer to my church family." This item yielded a mean score of 4.8, indicating that respondents felt significantly closer as a church family as a result of the season of prayer.

Metanoia Feedback Form also invited congregants to share personal testimonies, and stories of answered prayer and healing as a result of the season of prayer. These testimonies were published in the December, 1999 church newsletter, Rider. Anecdotal reports of answered prayer included:

- "I fasted and received healing for a friend (a tumor thought to be cancer was only a cyst.)"
- "I have had many strangers approach me with questions about God and church."

- “Many people have noticed a joy in me.”
- “I feel more love toward others.”
- “My marriage is closer and happier.”
- “God rearranged my schedule and prevented a disaster in my home.”
- “A happy, healthy new baby came into our lives.”

Incidental Observations

Much of the richness of the *Metanoia* prayer project cannot be portrayed in the quantitative data. Across the forty-day period, participants expressed the impact that prayer was having on them and the church through notes and anecdotal comments. The Congregational Reflection Group consisted of ten congregational leaders (the Executive Committee) who met each week during *Metanoia* to pray and provide ongoing feedback during the project. Out of this group, many subjective impressions of *Metanoia* were expressed. Anecdotal reports included:

1. “We haven’t seen so many youth up in the balcony for Sunday morning services in years.”
2. Jann Clark (a member of the Congregational Reflection Group) “felt moved to start a young adult Sunday school class.”
3. “All the Sunday school classes participated in the school of prayer and they loved it!”
4. “Even the youth are enthusiastic-they have all chosen prayer partners.”
5. Teachers were all surprised by the responsiveness of their classes and the number of questions asked.”
6. “I thank God for the bubbling excitement in our church.”

7. "We have many reports of answered prayer including a miraculous healing."
8. "People from other churches are asking how they can take part in *Metanoia*."

The pastor received a number of notes as a part of *Metanoia*. Some of these notes came as comments on Church Heart Exams:

- "This is the first time in forty years at Murray Hill that anybody has asked what I think."
- "I want to help, but I don't feel qualified to answer questions about our church."
- "No way for me to know how to answer this."
- "Thank God we're back on the right track."

Other notes were included on the *Metanoia* Feedback Form including:

- "Thank you for opening our eyes and hearts with the *Metanoia* season."
- "Terrific!"
- "I want to be more involved, but I can't go out at night."

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

This study focused on matters of the heart as foundational issues for building a healthy church. The biblical witness is clear that the measure of vitality in the faith community is the degree to which the hearts of people are turned toward God. When Saul disobeyed the Lord by offering unauthorized sacrifices, Samuel announced that God had rejected him as king. God's rejection came in response to a relatively minor lapse in Saul's behavior. The issue at stake was Saul's duplicitous heart. His failure in a small thing betrayed character flaws that would cause Saul to be unfaithful in leading the people. "The Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things that man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart (I Samuel 16:7). In other words, God builds a faithful community on the foundation of human hearts.

So, *Metanoia* attempted to go the next step in examining ways to enhance the health of the church by positively influencing heart attitudes through prayer. Although prayer and one's relationship with God are personal and subjective by nature, this study sought to provide some common language and shared categories for talking about spiritual transformation through prayer. A significant body of literature addresses prayer and spiritual transformation on an individual level. *Metanoia* focused on ways to impact the heart of the Body of Christ in which Christians share spiritual health and the responsibility for building a healthier Body.

The people of Murray Hill United Methodist Church have studied the words of Jesus referred to as "The Great Command" many times since the founding of this

congregation in 1901. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength . . . and love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30, 31). The practical question for the life of this church was, "Yes, but how should we do that?" The three-fold orientation of the heart contained in the great command was the canvass on which the details of *Metanoia* were painted. *Metanoia* invited the congregation to pray as the foundational step in loving God, self, and neighbor. For forty days the Murray Hill United Methodist congregation studied and practiced upward, inward, and outward directed prayer with the desire to draw closer to God and one another.

The fundamental premise behind *Metanoia* was that prayer actually changes human hearts. More precisely, the Church Heart Exam sought to analyze and systematically describe changes in attitude toward God, self, and others. Although no human can discern the heart of another person, this study assumed that attitudes provide visible evidence of the interior life.

Attitudes are the windows of the soul. Our attitudes are habituated patterns of orientation to circumstances, interaction with others, and reaction to stimuli around us. Since attitudes are minimally screened by the conscious intellect, they offer uncensored insights into the ruminations of the human heart. When God transforms a human heart, the change shows up in change of attitudes. "You were taught . . . to put off your old self . . . to be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self (Ephesians 4:22, 23).

Attitudes are also the driving forces behind our decisions and motivations. As Swindoll has put it, "Life is ten percent what happens to us and ninety percent how we

react to it" (28). The church can invest enormous resources in training leaders and developing innovative program ministries, but if we do not address attitudes, the church will not grow healthier. The reason for this is obvious. The church is a living organism, the Body of Christ that can be no healthier than its members.

As noted in the literature review, growth comes naturally to healthy bodies. *Metanoia* and the research that supported the project were not intended to build a larger body, but a healthier one. Many factors such as good communication, healthy interpersonal relationships, healthy leaders, clear purpose and mission, and well-organized programs of ministry contribute positively to church health. The foundation of health on which all of these manifestations of vitality depend is the life of the heart. In keeping with body imagery for the church, *Metanoia* focused on building a healthy heart in the church through prayer. In what ways was prayer therapeutic for the church's heart?

Major Findings

The results of this study indicate that prayer had significant effect on heart attitudes over a forty-day period. Despite the fact that the overall posttest means of the experimental and control groups showed no significant difference, a number of notable differences came to light on a subscale and per item basis. Eight items (forty percent) of the items on the upward subscale showed a significant, positive change in the experimental group. What factors might account for significant change in the upward-directed heart attitudes but not along other dimensions?

When a teacher of the law asked Jesus which commandment was most important, he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Mark 12:30). This

commandment points to the upward-directed heart as the first priority in human life. With Jesus' teaching in mind, it is not surprising that the first fruit of a season of prayer would be an enhancement of upward-directed heart attitudes. An analysis of the statistically significant items suggests specific ways that prayer changed hearts of the Murray Hill United Methodist congregation toward God:

1. Item 5: Loving one another is a priority. Focus: priority on relationships.
2. Item 32: Our worship is a joy-filled experience. Focus: sense of joy.
3. Item 35: We look forward to church events. Focus: joy in God's house.
4. Item 43: Most people are enthusiastic and involved. Focus: hunger for God.
5. Item 50: People feel a sense of peace in our church. Focus: sense of peace.
6. Item 53: People experience the presence of Christ here. Focus: presence of Jesus.
7. Item 56: Our congregation is mostly anxiety-free. Focus: lack of anxiety.
8. Item 59: Our church is a peacemaker in the community. Focus: peacemaking.

Two of these items reflect the greater sense of joy that congregants felt through *Metanoia*. This experience bears out the promises of Jesus that those who abide in his love will find complete joy (John 15:9,11). Joy is the outward expression of growing intimacy with God.

The experimental group also scored significantly on all items related to the peaceful heart. Paul drew a direct connection between prayer and the experience of peace when he promised that those who pray would receive the "peace of God which transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:6, 7). *Metanoia* promoted a spirit of peace in a congregation with a long history of conflict and lack of sensitivity to peacemaking.

This is a striking finding in light of recent struggles in the church. Murray Hill United Methodist Church merged in 1990 with Wesley United Methodist Church when the Wesley congregation reached a point of decline that it could no longer survive as a stand-alone church. Church leaders worked hard to develop a sense of unity and peace in the merged church community.

However, the merger of these congregations did not heal the many relational and spiritual problems that led to the decline of the Wesley United Methodist Church in the first place. Prior to the closing of the church, Wesley United Methodist had not received any new members or seen any growth for more than two decades. Negativity and a core of shame dominated attitudes of Wesley members. Unfortunately, these attitudes became a factor for illness in the merged congregation. Internal conflict, a spirit of dissension, and spiritual immaturity eroded the health of the combined congregation resulting in four pastoral changes in ten years and deep, persistent mistrust in the congregation. The reputation of Murray Hill as negative and conflicted is seen in the nickname, "Murder Hill," by which former pastors refer to the congregation.

The lack of peace within the congregation has been exacerbated by fear of the surrounding community. Murray Hill United Methodist Church is located in the zip code with the highest crime rate in Jacksonville. The church property is fenced on all sides for security. Many parishioners express anxiety about safety issues at church and a fear of involvement with people in the neighborhood. In this environment, a sense of peace and a desire to make peace are new, unexpected gifts for this congregation.

What dynamics might account for this congregation's experience of peace in a situation with a reputation for conflict and a climate of fear? In the Last Supper

discourses in John, Jesus refers to giving “my peace” to the disciples as a going-away gift (John 14:27). This gift of peace from Jesus came on the night before Jesus died, a time of great grief and fear that was not conducive to peaceful feelings. So, Jesus acknowledged that the peace of God comes in ways that do not make logical sense, “I do not give to you as the world gives” (John 14:27). In other words, the experience of the peace of Jesus is a pure gift that is not predicated on favorable circumstances or a sense of being in control of one’s destiny. Through *Metanoia* the people of Murray Hill received a beginning measure of this gift of divine peace.

The experimental group also showed significant, positive change of heart on every item related to the evangelist’s heart. These items included the following emphases:

1. Item 51: Our members invite lost people to church.
Focus: heart for lost people.
2. Item 54: Our members share Christ boldly with others. Focus: boldness.
3. Item 57: We have a spirit of joy. Focus: joy.
4. Item 60: Our church works at evangelism. Focus: taking initiative.

Murray Hill United Methodist church has been a declining congregation for more than twenty years. The principal reason for this decline has been a lack of focus on evangelism. No adults have joined the church by baptism and profession of faith since 1995. Given the lack of priority on evangelism in this congregation, this change of heart toward evangelism might be dismissed as wishful thinking. However, the biblical witness is that evangelism begins in prayer, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are

few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37, 38).

Overall, twenty-seven percent of the items (sixteen items) on the Church Heart Exam pointed to significant, positive change of heart in the experimental group. This level of change exceeded scores that can be explained by chance. What are some possible interpretations as to the meaning of these scores?

Since *Metanoia* was a new, exciting initiative in the church, some of these responses might be accounted to a general sense of excitement at the novelty of the project. For example, attendance at worship, Sunday school, and Wednesday Night Bible study exceeded prior year counts by twenty-percent. People enjoyed the experience of prayer, invited their friends, and spread their excitement. Shared excitement may have accounted for some of the elevation in items related to evangelism.

Metanoia also came within the first six months of the tenure of a new pastor. In one sense, a pastoral change in a congregation that has had four pastors in ten years is no big deal. On the other hand, Murray Hill has been a dependent, clergy-led congregation since its beginning days. This prayer project enjoyed some degree of halo effect related to high expectations and optimism from a new pastor. Whether the timing of *Metanoia* actually biased scores or not, the timing of the project within the honeymoon of a new pastor certainly created a more open, and willing climate for change.

The faith explanation for the twenty-seven percent differential between the experimental and control groups suggests that Murray Hill United Methodist Church has experienced the first fruits of a change of heart through prayer. After all, faith is a life-long journey. Even for the most enthusiastic and devoted disciples, a deepening

relationship with God cannot be rushed. *Metanoia* planted seeds in the hearts of the people that will grow as they are nurtured.

The lack of significant correlation between scores on the Involvement Questionnaire and the Church Heart Exam presented a very interesting finding. The natural expectation would be that people get more out of a program in which they are more involved. This did not seem to hold true in *Metanoia*. The lack of correlation may be partly attributable to design flaws in the Involvement Questionnaire that are addressed later in this chapter.

On the other hand, intercessory prayer may account for the fact that people who participated at minimal levels benefited from *Metanoia*. As a part of *Metanoia*, hundreds of people served as intercessors for change of heart. The lack of correlation between involvement and change of heart may simply be an answer to prayer. Change of heart that did not correlate with levels of involvement may also point to the principle of shared health in the Body of Christ. As the Body became healthier with more wholeheartedness toward God, the parts of the Body became healthier, too.

Jesus announced repentance (*metanoia*) as the first movement of new life in the kingdom of God. "Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 4:17). He did not suggest that the people do anything for God or change anything about them other than turning their hearts toward God in a fresh way. In the preaching of Jesus, repentance was more than a beginning point of the spiritual life. He declared that repentance, a consistent turning back to God, is the foundational rhythm of the Christian life.

As the name suggests, the major spiritual dynamic in this research project was repentance. Vine points out that the word we translate as "repentance" literally means "looking back" (280). For forty days the people of Murray Hill were invited to look back on their lives, on their church, and on their relationship with God. The project was simply a call to prayer with no specific agenda for change or action beyond turning back to God. For many long-term members who have always thought of the church in terms of programs, numbers, and predictable results, the concept of *Metanoia* seemed strange. Why devote so much energy to an initiative that did not promise specific results?

Metanoia provided an opportunity for the people of Murray Hill to set aside their agenda and listen to God for forty days. Prayer became a channel for the Holy Spirit to speak and create the beginnings of God's agenda for the congregation. Through *Metanoia*, this congregation intentionally moved in reverse gear from their accustomed pattern of control and dependence on human effort.

The popular management slogan, "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail," suggests that success in human enterprises depends solely upon the effectiveness of strategic planning and organized action. *Metanoia* was an experience of timely, unforced change that came through prayer. Certainly, the Murray Hill congregation continued to work and plan during these forty days. However, the climate of prayer opened new channels of dependence on God for a plan and the resources to carry out the plan. Prayer provided a common method and agenda for Murray Hill to do the work of ministry. Many members reported a sense of unity and common bond that they had not seen in the congregation in many years.

The Church Heart Exam

Since the Church Heart Exam is a researcher-designed instrument including sixty items, a major question for this study was the reliability of the scale. As noted earlier, per item tests for internal reliability demonstrated internal consistency to the .05 level. However, some validity issues remain a question mark. Did the Church Heart Exam measure what it purported to measure?

The study design did not include follow-up interviews with subjects for feedback on clarity of items or the testing experience. In examining the per item *t*-tests for significance, seven items showed exceptionally high *t*-scores that might suggest biases, confusion, or dissonance in respondents. The questionable test items included:

1. Item 12 ($t=.90$): We finish the projects we start.
Focus: perseverance (outward).
2. Item 13 ($t=.88$): Our church leaders model humility.
Focus: humility (inward).
3. Item 18 ($t=.88$): People from any background are welcome here.
Focus: lack of arrogance (outward).
4. Item 20 ($t=.67$): Our leaders tell the truth even when it hurts.
Focus: truthfulness (upward).
5. Item 30 ($t=.97$): We are free of major divisions.
Focus: absence of conflict (outward).
6. Item 34 ($t=.99$): We confront problems fearlessly.
Focus: courage (inward).
7. Item 55 ($t=.97$): Our leaders model self-control.

Focus: self-control (inward).

A common theme in items 20, 30, and 34 is conflict management. Many of the members of Murray Hill United Methodist Church verbalized anxiety about conflict in the church and were hypersensitive on this subject. The fact that their names were requested with the questionnaire may have created an uncomfortable response in light of this anxiety. Item 18 touched upon a potential sore topic in a white congregation surrounded by a neighborhood that is one-half minority citizens. Over the years a number of ministry opportunities such as a basketball court for youth and bus ministry to bring children to Sunday School have been scuttled by fears that minority children and their families would come to the church. Within the church, Murray Hill has struggled with cliques produced by extended family alliances and turf guarding. Much of the loss of members from a high of 1200 persons in 1975 to the current membership of 504 is attributed in the memory of long-term members to interpersonal conflict.

One additional item may have questionable validity. Nine pretest and eight posttest questionnaires from the experimental group were returned with item 8 ("Many people give sacrificially.") blank. Three respondents included a note apologizing for not completing the item due to lack of information. Although this question was designed to probe perceptions of generosity, respondents may have taken it as a request for factual information about the financial life of the church.

The Involvement Questionnaire

The Involvement Questionnaire was intended to measure degree of involvement in the five areas of emphasis that comprised *Metanoia*. However, design flaws may have limited the effectiveness of the instrument. Some of the response items pointed to on-

going weekly ministries (Item 2, "I attended Sunday School.") while other items queried involvement in one-shot events (Item 7, "I took part in the Jericho walk.") This design flaw led to inconsistencies in response patterns. A respondent may have been quite involved in weekly Sunday School and worship services while appearing to be less involved overall because he or she missed one-shot events. Also, a Likert Scale response grid was less effective on this instrument than on the Church Heart Exam. For several of the items a more appropriate response would have been "yes" or "no."

Notwithstanding these limitations, internal consistency testing on the Involvement Questionnaire yielded .84 on the alpha scale. This finding would indicate that the Involvement Questionnaire had a moderate degree of internal reliability. The major limitations of this instrument had to do with construct reliability as detailed above.

Weaknesses of the Study

The rule of thumb in research is that increasing the size of the data pool strengthens every study. This study relied upon a relatively small pool of subjects (experimental $n=22$; control $n=18$). In order to yield a larger pool, the initial random sampling of respondents should have been more in the range of 300 persons.

Some changes in the method of data collection might have strengthened the study. The Church Heart Exam called for respondents to identify themselves by name. An anonymous, numerically coded identification system would have produced greater freedom of response and less bias toward giving the "right answer."

The sheer size of the Church Heart Exam may have adversely affected response rates from subjects. In the experimental group, forty-four percent of persons contacted actually responded. The response rate in the control group was thirty-eight percent. The

questionnaire included sixty items and required the investment of approximately twenty minutes to complete. Reducing the instrument to a fifteen-item inventory might have led to a better response rate.

Biases based on gender and age may have affected experimental group scores. Although the Murray Hill United Methodist Church is an older congregation with more women than men in membership, the data pool was skewed in comparison to congregational composition. Certainly, the degree of gender and age bias decreased the comparability of experimental to control group.

The research pool was significantly limited by the drop-out rate of those who completed pretest questionnaires but failed to complete posttest questionnaires. Since data analysis was limited to matched sets of pretest and posttest questionnaires, fifty percent of respondents dropped out of the final data pool. Stronger efforts at follow-up by mail and telephone might have produced stronger responses rates. Also, the length of the questionnaire may have had a negative effect of response rates.

To assess change in deeply held values and attitudes, a more longitudinal research design would have yielded more meaningful findings. Certainly, forty days is long enough for some level of impact on attitudes. As noted earlier, habit formation can take place over this period of time. The formation of underlying attitudes that drive behavior is a longer-term proposition. An alternative research design might include six-month and twelve-month follow-up testing on the Church Heart Exam to assess continued change of heart attitudes.

Distraction by the pace of life is an intervening variable in any prayer project that does not take folks out to the desert. By using intact groups and emphasizing prayer in

the on-going life of the church, *Metanoia* suffered through a significant amount of distraction and disruption. For example, a crisis in the youth ministry led to the cancellation of one session of the Wednesday night School of prayer. The research design might have been strengthened by including some “desert” experiences in the form of one-day retreats at a remote location at the beginning, midpoint, and conclusion of *Metanoia*. These retreats might have provided the opportunity for renewal and centering in the midst of hectic, distracted lives.

Although intercessory prayer was a significant part of *Metanoia*, a number of steps could have been taken to strengthen this component. Church members were invited in the Sunday Morning worship services on September 26 and October 2, 1999 to commit to intercessory prayer during *Metanoia*. As noted earlier, ninety-four persons made prayer commitments and left a prayer commitment card on the altar. The study included no further follow-up in the form of accountability or individual encouragement of intercessors that might have enhanced the consistency of intercessory prayer. Daily devotional guides with directions for prayer journaling might have enhanced the effectiveness of the intercessory prayer component.

Ironically, the Congregational Reflection Group did not commit as a group to serve as intercessors for the church during *Metanoia*. This leadership group met weekly for eight weeks during the prayer project to facilitate communication about details of the ministry. Prayer was a part of these weekly meetings, but commitment to intercessory prayer was left up to the individual.

Prior to the beginning of *Metanoia*, a leader training event was conducted to brief Sunday School teachers and small group leaders on the purpose of *Metanoia* and the

curriculum. Although thirty-one persons served as teachers or leaders across the course of *Metanoia*, only eleven persons attended the leader training. Absentees were provided the textbook, training syllabus, and teaching outlines. Weekly polling of teachers and group leaders indicated that they and their classes were enjoying and benefiting from teaching on prayer. However, many teachers expressed some feelings of inadequacy to be teaching on prayer and frustration at “not knowing what to do.” More consistent leader training might have enhanced this study.

When the administrative board of Murray Hill United Methodist church agreed in July, 1999 to participate in *Metanoia*, the question was raised: Should this be a season of prayer and fasting or should we limit the focus to prayer only? The consensus of this group was that the congregation was not yet ready for a call to fasting and that prayer was the appropriate focus. After the conclusion of the forty-day season, many congregants asked for follow-up teaching on fasting. Their question was: Why did we not fast during *Metanoia*? In terms of spiritual benefits, including fasting might have strengthened *Metanoia*. However, the inclusion of fasting as another independent variable might have clouded the data.

Implications for Further Research

One fundamental question raised through *Metanoia* is how the church might take the next step beyond a program to promote a life-long disposition of repentance. By its very nature, *metanoia* is more a dynamic movement than a static quality in the spiritual life. One does not acquire repentance per se through an active prayer life. *Metanoia* is more of an orientation of life that consistently demands account of one's life to God. Many historical practices such as the sacrament of Reconciliation in

Roman Catholicism and revival meetings in evangelical Protestant churches reflect awareness that repentance must be reappropriated time and again in the Christian life. Additional research is needed to assess what sort of prayer and reconciliation ministries might effectively call people to repentance in the twenty-first century.

A more in-depth examination of the concept of heart attitudes would build upon this beginning exploration of the relationship of prayer and church health. By focusing on heart attitudes that drive our lives, researchers look behind the facade of performance for a glimpse at the values that motivate human activity. The Church Heart Exam provided church researchers with a way of assessing change of heart along the three dimensions that summarize all relationships: the upward relationship with God, the inward relationship with the self, and the outward relationship with other people.

This study did not include the exhaustive process of standardization of the Church Heart Exam. Standardization of the instrument might be a logical next step for further research. This would require the administration of the Church Heart Exam to a significantly larger population of church subjects, including denominations other than United Methodist. Both congregations that took part in this initial study were primarily Caucasian and native English speaking. Normative data should include persons of other ethnicities. More data are needed from a wider age range, including persons under the age of eighteen.

Limitations of resources dictated that this study focus on a single congregation for a relatively short period of time. As noted earlier, many questions remain as to the longer-term impact of prayer on heart attitudes. Follow-up studies designed to assess change in heart attitudes on a more longitudinal basis could prove fruitful. An alternative

design might emphasize prayer within intact groups over a twelve-month period with monthly prayer events or retreats to maintain focus and momentum.

As an alternative to research on intact groups, a further study utilizing small, tightly controlled prayer treatment groups would yield data with less bias from extraneous variables. A design that allowed more time for seasoning of the heart through prayer, perhaps three to six months, might best serve this type of research. Such an inquiry would also afford more opportunity for qualitative data from semi-structured interviews that might be collated with Church Heart Exam data.

A meta-study of literature on the subject of prayer would be an extremely helpful area of further research. Although thousands of books and articles have been written over the centuries on prayer, little meta-research has been done to categorize or analyze this literature. A meta-study might analyze prayer literature by author, subject, type, historical period, and theological or denominational background.

Implications for Practice

This study assumed that the subject congregation, Murray Hill United Methodist Church, is a microcosm of the United Methodist denomination. Murray Hill perceives itself as a traditional Methodist church that values the Methodist way of worship and practice. Although this local church has unique challenges that grow out of its ministry setting, *Metanoia* provided insights for practice of ministry that offer benefits to United Methodism as a whole.

One persistent question in this study has been: How do we set priorities in ministry, and specifically, where does prayer fit in these priorities? For forty days, Murray Hill made prayer a priority. *Metanoia* invited the congregation to listen to God

and allow God to teach us about God's priorities for the church. In other words, this study pointed to the model of Jesus who prayed his way into the future as an alternative to efforts to control the future. Jesus' promise to the church was that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things and reveal God's chosen future for the church. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things . . . he will guide you into all truth . . . he will tell you what is yet to come" (John 14:26, 16:13).

Murray Hill mirrors the pattern of decline in the United Methodist Church over the past three decades. The temptation in a desperate situation of decline is to become increasingly fear-driven and controlling. Making prayer the priority offered the church an alternative to anxiety about the future. This research project has suggested that learning God's plans and priorities by making prayer a priority is a biblical alternative to the frantic search for programs that will bring vitality to the church.

Through *Metanoia* God created freshness and a spirit of openness in a long-established congregation. These qualities were evident in a new optimism and enthusiasm about the future. During this season of prayer, church leaders felt moved to invite the congregation as a whole to Fresh Start focus groups to give people a chance to share their fresh ideas and dreams for the church. In a sense the Body of Christ at Murray Hill seems to be having a born again experience where God is setting aside the priority on institutionalized values and is calling the church to a fresh experience of the Holy Spirit.

The fresh start that God has created for Murray Hill United Methodist Church is evident in the desire for revival that is emerging in the congregation. Through the prayer event that hosted Broken Vessels, the congregation was introduced to influences of the

Brownsville Revival.⁵ Members of this visiting ministry team shared personal testimonies as well as praise and worship that they learned through their involvement in the Pensacola, Florida based revival. Since the end of *Metanoia*, Broken Vessels has made a return visit to Murray Hill for continued teaching on prayer and revival. A leadership team from Murray Hill subsequently traveled to Pensacola to take part in the Brownsville Revival and visit Pine Forest United Methodist Church, the home church of Broken Vessels.

The dynamic of healing through prayer emerged as a key insight in this study. A number of people experienced physical healing, healing of relationships, and emotional healing through *Metanoia*. A team of lay leaders felt led during the season of prayer to start a church-wide intercessory prayer chain for healing. The Aaron and Hur Society (prayer partners) initiated an altar prayer ministry that invited folks after every worship service to come forward for healing prayer and anointing with oil. In weekly praise and prayer times, many congregants shared testimonies of healing of old resentments and broken relationships within the congregation.

Healing through prayer was not an original focus in this research project. As the forty-day season of prayer proceeded, the hunger for healing naturally emerged. On a smaller scale, the intense interest in healing that came through *Metanoia* parallels the reaction of people to Jesus' earthly ministry. When people became aware of Jesus' healing power, they crowded him to the point that he could not even eat (Mark 3:20).

Jesus commissioned his disciples to heal in the same way, but where are those crowds today? Unfortunately, the church has relegated healing to a specialized or

⁵ Brownsville Revival began on Father's Day in 1995 at the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. More than three million people have attended the revival, making in the largest revival in modern history (Brown 12).

elective ministry that not every church feels called or comfortable offering. This study on prayer and church health has suggested that the health of the church is evidenced in the healing that people receive, as they become part of the Body of Christ.

The principal mode of healing ministry during *Metanoia* was not healing services but intercessory prayer. The desire for prayer gained momentum over the forty-day period as members partnered in prayer and became comfortable with the practice. The greatest contribution of pastoral leadership in building momentum was to practice believing prayer in consistent, public example.

Anecdotal reports from *Metanoia* pointed not only to many instances of answered prayer, but also to the surprise of many participants at the many requests for prayer they received. As their devotion to prayer increased, requests for prayer from co-workers, neighbors, casual acquaintances, and strangers increased. In my own experience as a new pastor to Murray Hill United Methodist Church, my love and compassion for congregants deepened exponentially as I interceded for them during *Metanoia*. In every way, the Holy Spirit confirmed internally and through the response of the people that prayer is the first act of leadership in pastoral ministry.

To build healthy churches, Christian leadership development is critical. As Maxwell puts it, "Everything rises and falls on leadership" (8). What priorities and competencies characterize leadership that is distinctively Christian? The first qualification of Christian leadership is to be a devoted follower of Jesus. Moreover, Jesus prescribed two essential attributes of followers that grow out of prayer:

1. Obedience. "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15).
2. Abiding. "If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit"

(John 15:5).

Teaching lay leaders to depend upon prayer in all their decisions and actions is the first step in leadership training. Lay leaders need training not only in methods of prayer but also in the priority of prayer. From the earliest stages of discipleship training, emphasis on prayer to fulfill the great command to love God, yourself, and your neighbor produces church leaders who pray. A school of prayer is an essential teaching component of churches that make leadership training a priority.

Every church wrestles to some extent with a sense of separation between clergy and laity. This separation erodes trust and results in much reduced effectiveness as pastors struggle to do everything on their own. Partnership in prayer bridges the gap of artificial structures we have created in the church and builds the unity of the Body of Christ. An indispensable part of lay leader training should be the emphasis on “one anothering,” particularly in the area of prayer. As the people pray for their pastor, they do for him or her what Aaron and Hur did for Moses in holding up his arms until the battle was won (Exodus 17:12, 13).

Jesus described his church as a “house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17). What implications does this study have for building the church as a house of prayer? As this study examined the connection between prayer and church health, the concept of priorities has been a repeated theme. What are the priorities in the life of the church that lead to greater health and vitality? The literature review suggests that the first century church relied upon prayer as the priority. Over the centuries, fervent prayer undergirded every great revival of the church. Frost points out that the Great Awakening of the 18th century was preceded by 100 years of uninterrupted intercessory prayer on the part of

Moravian Christians (Frost, October 1999 lecture). In other words, vitality will come to the church when prayer is the foundation of our lives.

Designing and implementing a forty-day season of prayer was a far easier task than building a house of prayer. If prayer is the foundation of the ministry, resources must be allocated to reflect this priority. Key elements in a church that seeks to function as a house of prayer would include:

1. A pastor who prioritizes his or her time and teaching in keeping with the example of the apostles who gave their attention to “prayer and the ministry of the word”(Acts 6:4).
2. Financial resources dedicated to prayer ministry in the form of a budget for prayer events, teaching materials, and training for leaders.
3. A school of prayer that trains disciples to pray.
4. A prayer room or prayer chapel for twenty-four hour intercessory prayer.
5. A person designated as prayer leader and a team of prayer partners.
6. Altar ministry for healing as a part of worship services.
7. A weekly intercessory prayer meeting that lifts up church leadership, evangelism prospects, and healing needs.
8. Prayer chains and prayer outreach ministries via dedicated prayer phone lines, websites, and fax ministries.
9. Prayer leadership in the community through Light Houses of prayer, Concerts of prayer, and ecumenical prayer conferences.

Implications for Theory

For all of their sincere desire to build a church that honors Jesus Christ, church leaders do not agree on what constitutes a healthy church. The temptation is to look at the external evidence such as the physical plant, annual budget, and attendance figures as principal indicators of health. These measures of health would be appropriate if our goals were temporal and focused simply on building an institutional church. *Metanoia* has suggested that the church needs some alternative definitions for church health in terms of the life of the heart. Of course, the difficulty comes in letting go of the priorities that are so deeply ingrained in our way of thinking. This study offered the hope that even our most deeply held values can change through prayer.

In fact, a redefinition of church health in terms of the life of the heart is a very timely shift. For all of our rapidly developing technology, the life of the heart is a neglected dimension of life in the twenty-first century. People are increasingly struggling with isolation and fear of others as evidenced by the popularity of devices like “caller i.d.” Sweet refers to this trend toward isolation as “cocooning” (61). The more isolated people become, the greater the hunger for authentic relationship with others.

Through the ministry of prayer, the church has the opportunity to make life-changing connection with isolated people. Prayer crosses all boundaries of geography, technology, and human fear. Prayer validates the motives of the church to suspicious, unchurched people and softens the heart of those on the inside of the church.

The opportunity for the church to minister through prayer is enhanced by the prayerlessness of American society. For almost three decades, prayer has been barred from the public arena. The result of our prayerlessness has been a hardening of the heart

of our society as a whole. Ironically, a great hunger for prayer is also afoot in our times. In the hours and days following the Columbine High School massacre in April 1999, parents and community leaders were left in shock and helplessness. What did parents, school officials, and elected officials at every level ask of people who wanted to help? They asked them to pray. Interestingly, many of these public figures who asked for prayer were not religious people. Many of them had supported a non-prayer policy in the schools, but felt the need for prayer in their moment of greatest crisis.

This openness to prayer in times of need reflects a deep hunger for something more than a pill or treatment of symptoms of illness. It also represents a tremendous evangelism opportunity for the church. Even persons who do not believe in an afterlife want quality of life today. Whereas the prominent evangelism approaches of the past century have reached out to people by offering eternal life in heaven to those who would commit to Jesus, twenty-first century evangelism may begin with prayer for healing.

The biggest unknown as the twenty-first century begins is the impact that the internet and related technology will have on the way we think and live. At the very least, leaders from all walks of life agree that we face a new information paradigm for our culture. At least one aspect of the information revolution that is already apparent is the way people think about space. Before the dawn of the internet, access to services or opportunities equated to physical proximity. This is no longer true. Increasingly, anyone with an internet connection can take part in limitless opportunities regardless of where he or she lives.

How does this redefinition of space affect the church? Although church leaders insist that the church is not the building, most practice of ministry in the church assumes

that the building is where one finds the church. If the church is to have a part in the future, people must be able to participate in the life of the church without coming to the church property. Modems, websites, and chat rooms are essential tools of evangelism in the new millennium.

However, simply having these tools does not guarantee reaching people for Christ. They must be used strategically. Prayer is the personal connection with people that is as effective in an electronic space as in a physical space. Church websites and chat rooms that offer intercessory prayer can be powerful tools for building relationships with people. As churches set up websites, these electronic spaces serve the same purpose as the church building. They are houses of prayer, and in the case of the internet, literally houses of prayer for all nations. The hope of the future is that the church will be conceived more as a connection of prayer than a physical building on the corner.

The Call Within the Call

This extended study of prayer and heart attitudes has not only affected the hearts of others; it has changed my heart. The unanimous voice of spiritual writers across the centuries is that prayer is a double blessing. Prayer changes others as we see answers to prayer, but prayer also changes the one who prays.

A significant shift for me in this study process is the realization that I need partners in ministry through prayer. My historic style of isolation and surface relationships has come under the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit over the course of the eighteen months devoted to this research project. God has taught me that I cannot be an effective pastor if others are not interceding for me. Since *Metanoia*, prayer partners have been raised up to pray daily for me and my family and to pray before each worship

service. God is using partnership in prayer to grow mutual love between members of the congregation and me and to create an atmosphere of trust and openness among us.

This focus on prayer has created a greater hunger for prayer in my life than I had previously known. As I persevere in the life of prayer, I am discovering that growth in prayer is more about desire than methodology. An increasing desire to know and love God naturally leads to greater devotion to prayer as something one wants to do. I no longer see prayer as a duty, although God expects God's people to pray. Prayer is becoming a privilege and source of great joy in my life.

I also sense that prayer is an integral part of my calling within the call to ministry. In 1997 I developed a five-word statement of purpose for my life and ministry: **Abiding, Loving, Serving, Preaching, and Growing**. Abiding in God is the center of prayer out of which I am able to express the details of God's purpose for my life. Even more, I have become convinced through this research process of the urgent need for prophets and teachers of prayer within the United Methodist Church. I sense that God is preparing me to be a part of building up the larger church as a house of prayer for all nations.

Implications for Leadership

"Whenever God gives vision to a saint, he puts him, as it were, in the shadow of his hand, and the saint's duty is to be still and listen" (Chambers 13).

Over the course of this study, I have had a repeated dream. In this dream, I am climbing a mountain in the dark. I can tell that I am fairly high in my climb because it is cold and the wind is very strong, but it is too dark to see how high I am. As a matter of fact, it is so dark that I cannot see where to reach for my next handhold or foothold. My mouth is dry from fear and I can feel a tightness in my chest. The only solace I have is

the rope around my waist and the knowledge that God is on the other end of the rope. I cannot see God, but I can feel God on the other end of the rope.

I believe that God has given me this dream as a metaphor of spiritual leadership. In Chapter 1, I noted two distinctive marks of Christian leadership:

1. The awareness that you do not know what to do to build a healthy Body.
2. If you knew what to do, you do not have the personal power to carry it out.

This view of leadership contradicts everything the world teaches about being in charge and having a plan. Our task as church leaders is to stay connected to God so that God might show us the way. Through prayer, leaders admit that God alone is in control and knows the way.

In other words, we can master the tools for ministry, but we will never master the ministry. The leadership model most needed today is a model of prayer in which dependence upon God is seen as the greatest strength. Our lust for competency and credentials diminishes our usefulness as a free-flowing channel for the power of God into the lives of others. Chambers is correct when he suggests that “the greatest competitor to devotion to Jesus is service for him” (13).

The good news is that God is always working. This study was founded on the premise that God changes human hearts if we seek God in prayer. Where God’s people are seeking to grow in knowledge and love of God, anything is possible.

Appendix A

THE CHURCH HEART EXAM

THE CHURCH HEART EXAM

NAME: _____ CHURCH: _____

DATE: _____

PLEASE **CIRCLE** THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH:

1 = VERY LITTLE 2 = SOMEWHAT 3 = MODERATELY SO

4 = QUITE A LOT 5 = VERY MUCH

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My church discusses important decisions openly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I see a deepening love among our members. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. We learn from our mistakes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. People in the community trust our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Loving one another is a priority. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. People can take a risk and grow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. My church leaders can be trusted without question. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Many people give sacrificially. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. We pray and wait on God before making decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Our leaders are good role models for children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. We cooperate more than compete. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. We finish the projects we start. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Our church leaders model humility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The members of my church trust each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH:**1 = VERY LITTLE 2 = SOMEWHAT 3 = MODERATELY SO****4 = QUITE A LOT 5 = VERY MUCH**

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. The members of my church are eager to serve God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. People are quick to forgive each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. We keep our commitments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. People from any background are welcome here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Our leaders admit their mistakes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Our leaders tell the truth even when it hurts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Our church leaders accept authority over them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Church leaders are open to suggestions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Our members have confidence in the leaders. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Our leaders act as servants to the congregation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Our members are eager to learn and grow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. People see our church as a happy place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Our congregation is united. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. We are open to new ideas and new people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. We can laugh at ourselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. We are free of major divisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Our leaders are willing to try a different approach. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Our worship is a joy-filled experience. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH:

1 = VERY LITTLE 2 = SOMEWHAT 3 = MODERATELY SO

4 = QUITE A LOT 5 = VERY MUCH

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33. We help one another. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. We confront problems fearlessly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. We look forward to church events. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. It is OK to disagree in my church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. We are confident about the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. We have a desire to grow spiritually. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Everyone is treated the same in our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Our leaders struggle with worry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Our leaders model a heart for God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. We seek God's will first. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Most people are enthusiastic and involved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. We are glad to support God's work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. We take the initiative in meeting needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. We are excited about the present. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Our church is a good place for kids to grow up. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. We use resources wisely. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Our leaders are prudent in their decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. People feel a sense of peace in our church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH:

1 = VERY LITTLE 2 = SOMEWHAT 3 = MODERATELY SO
 4 = QUITE A LOT 5 = VERY MUCH

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51. Our members invite lost people to church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Our leaders show good understanding. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. People experience the presence of Christ here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Our members share Christ boldly with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. Our leaders model self-control. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. Our congregation is mostly anxiety-free. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. We have a spirit of joy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. Our leaders have a vision for the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Our church is a peacemaker in the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. Our church works at evangelism. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

END OF CHURCH HEART EXAM**Data for Statistical Purposes Only**

____ Male
 ____ Female

____ Date of Birth

Ethnicity: ____ Caucasian ____ African-American ____ Asian
 ____ Caucasian ____ African-American ____ Asian ____ Native American
 ____ Pacific Islander ____ Other Ethnicity

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

Appendix B

THE INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____

DATE _____

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR
INVOLVEMENT IN *METANOLA* OVER THE PAST SIX WEEKS:

1 = VERY LITTLE 2 = SOMEWHAT 3 = MODERATELY SO
4 = QUITE A LOT 5 = VERY MUCH

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I attended the Wednesday night Bible study. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I attended Sunday school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I participated as a Prayer Partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I attended Sunday morning worship. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I made a personal commitment to prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I participated in weekly prayer groups. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I took part in the Jericho walk. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I attended Sunday evening services. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I took part in the Broken Vessels weekend. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I took part in the 24-hour prayer vigil. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix C

SUNDAY SCHOOL OF PRAYER

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Murray Hill United Methodist Church
September 26 through November 7, 1999

"Whenever God determines to do a great work, He first sets His people to pray."
C.H. Spurgeon

"Give me 100 preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergy or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth. God does nothing but in answer to prayer."
John Wesley

Desired Outcomes from the School of Prayer:

1. That participants learn how to pray more effectively.
2. A change of attitude about prayer.
3. Planting of a "seed" for continued priority on prayer.
4. A change of heart within the congregation as a result of prayer.
5. Development of personal habits of prayer and daily devotions.
6. Development of family prayer and devotions.

Suggestions for Class Teaching and prayer:

1. Begin class with prayer and reserve 10 minutes at the end of class for intercession for church, pastor, and pastor's family. A weekly prayer need list will be furnished to you.
2. Take a few moments prior to September 26 or on that day to draw names for prayer partners in the class during the six week period. The best arrangement is same gender prayer partners.
3. Encourage class members to commit to daily personal prayer during the 40 days. Commitment cards will be furnished.
4. Use the discussion questions at the end of chapters in the Maxwell book as a helpful aid in whatever ways are helpful to you.
5. Ask a class member or two to keep a journal of prayer requests and to report answers to prayer weekly.

The Sunday School of Prayer
Page 2.

Week One, September 26: UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF PRAYER

Bible focus: Exodus 17: 8-16.
Teacher Resource: Maxwell, 1-12.

Week Two, October 3: ADJUSTING OUR ATTITUDES ABOUT PRAYER

Bible focus: Luke 11:1-13.
Teacher Resource: Maxwell, 13-29.

Week Three, October 10: DEVELOPING PRACTICAL PRAYER SKILLS

Bible focus: Matthew 6:5-15.
Teacher Resource: Maxwell, 31-50.

Week Four, October 17: AVOIDING PERSONAL PRAYER KILLERS

Bible focus: James 1:5-7, Isaiah 59:1-8
Teacher Resource: Maxwell, 51-64

Week Five, October 24: INTERCESSION: HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS

Bible focus: Acts 12:1-17.
Teacher Resource: Maxwell, 65-76.

**Week Six, October 31: PROTECTING AND PARTNERING WITH YOUR
PASTOR**

Bible focus: John 17:6-19.
Teacher Resource: Maxwell, 77-91.

**UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF
PRAYER**

Sunday School of Prayer

September 26, 1999

Today's Bible Focus: Exodus 17: 8-16

While Joshua led the troops, Moses engaged in

Exodus 17:9

Aaron and Hur are the first examples in the Bible
of the power of _____
_____. Exodus 17:12

According to Exodus 17:15,16 true worship
happens where _____ were _____
_____ to the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

How do we engage in spiritual warfare today?

What's the greatest "answered prayer" story
you've ever heard?

Think of examples of people in history who have
prayed behind the scenes. Can you think of times
in your life when people prayed behind the scenes
for you?

Describe what could happen in our church if a
core group of people prayed daily for the pastor
and leaders.

"Whenever God determines to do a great work,
He first sets His people to pray." C.H. Spurgeon
What great work is God desiring that you pray
for?

**ADJUSTING OUR ATTITUDES ABOUT
PRAYER**

Sunday School of Prayer

October 3, 1999

Today's Bible Focus: Luke 11:1-13

5 Attitudes about Prayer that Jesus Teaches:

1. Prayer is an _____ relationship
with God.
"Our Father" is translated "Abba" or _____
_____.
2. Prayer affirms God's _____
over us.
"Hallowed (holy) be Your Name."
3. Prayer is _____ with God.
"Your kingdom come . . . Your will be done."
4. Prayer is a _____
relationship.
"Forgive us our sins as we also forgive
everyone who sins against us."
5. Prayer is _____
"Lead us not into temptation . . . deliver us
from the evil one."

Discussion Questions:

What do you consider to be the most important
qualities of a positive, growing relationship with
God?

How can you pray more effectively to build a closer
relationship with God? What personal attitudes or
habits in your life hinder you in prayer?

**DEVELOPING PRACTICAL PRAYER
SKILLS**

Sunday School of Prayer
October 10, 1999

Brewer 137

Bible Focus: Matthew 6: 5-15

In Matthew 6:5, Jesus defines "hypocrite" as a

Secrecy in prayer (Matthew 6:6) is Jesus' way of
guarding against _____
for prayer.

"The longer the prayer, the better." Is this true?
Why or why not?

If God knows our needs before we ask
(Matthew 6:8) why should we ask God for our
needs?

In Matthew 6:5-15 Jesus uses the word "forgive"
_____ times.

What is the connection between forgiveness and
prayer?

Discussion Questions

1. Many Christians feel like their prayer life is more
a bag lunch than a banquet. What are the main
reasons people miss out on great prayer times
with God?
2. What do you consider to be the top three ways
people enter the presence of God? Which is most
meaningful to you?
3. What do you find helpful in creating a great
atmosphere and setting for prayer? What do you
find distracting?

**AVOIDING PERSONAL PRAYER
KILLERS**

Sunday School of Prayer
October 17, 1999

Brewer 138

Bible Focus: Isaiah 59:1-8; James 1:5-7

Praying with unconfessed sin is like _____
_____ in the _____. (Isaiah
59:2)

Outside of God's guidance in prayer, we
rely on _____
and speak _____. (Isaiah 59:4)

The key to powerful prayer is to pray _____
_____ and not _____.
(James 1:6) What does this mean?

What character qualities define a "double-
minded person"? (James 1:7)

Discussion Questions

1. Can you remember a time someone hung up on you on the telephone? Do we ever hang up the telephone on God?
2. What distractions or bad habits are prayer killers in your life? Why are these prayer killers so difficult for you?
3. What can you do to avoid prayer killers? How can Christians help each other with hindrances to prayer?
4. What difference would it make in your life if you experienced completely open communication with God?

**INTERCESSION: HOW TO PRAY FOR
OTHERS**

Brewer 139

The Sunday School of Prayer

October 24, 1999

Today's Bible Focus: Acts 12:1-17

The key to Peter's escape from prison was the _____
_____ of the church. Acts 12:5

Through prayer, Peter's _____ as well as
his physical safety was guaranteed. Acts 12:11

Ironically, the early Christians _____
that God would answer their prayers for Peter.
Acts 12:15

Prayer intercessors have three important qualities:

1. Strong _____ with that person.
2. Willingness to _____ for others.
3. _____ from God in prayer.

6 Ways That You Can Pray for Others:

1. That they would _____ God's will for
their lives.
2. That they would _____ God's will in their lives.
3. For _____ In their lives.
4. To have a _____
with God.
5. For _____ In their lives.
6. For them to have a _____.

Protecting and Partnering with Your Pastor
The Sunday School of Prayer
October 31, 1999

Brewer 140

Bible Focus: John 17:6-19; I Timothy 2:1-2

Jesus prayed for His disciples that God would protect them from a spirit of _____.
John 17:11

Spiritual protection depends upon the power of _____.
John 17: 11

The point of our prayers for one another is not to deliver them from circumstances but to protect them from the _____. John 17:15

Our _____ as disciples is to pray for our leaders. I Timothy 2:1

Discussion Questions

1. If you were a pastor, which of the 5 most common problems that pastors face would affect you the most? (loneliness, stress, feelings of inadequacy, depression, spiritual warfare?)
2. Have you ever fallen into the trap of thinking your pastor should be perfect? How does this hurt your pastor?
3. What's the difference between praying for your pastor according to your agenda and praying according to God's agenda?
4. How can you "hold up your pastor's hands" (See Ex. 17: 8-13)?

Break into groups of two or three and pray now for your pastor and his family.

**PRAYING OUR CHURCH TO HER
POTENTIAL**

The Sunday School of Prayer
November 7, 1999

Brewer 141

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message that all of them may be one." John 17: 20-21

God intends for His church to teach the _____ of God to everyone in heaven and earth. Ephesians 3:10

The gospel is the power of God (dunamis=dynamite!) for salvation. _____ is the detonator! Romans 1:16

Read together John 17:9-24. In this prayer, Jesus expresses His desires for the church:

1. To sense the _____ of God. John 17:22
2. To follow the _____ of God. John 17:8
3. To be _____ in the love of God. John 17:21
4. To go forth in the _____ of God. John 17:17-18
5. To experience the _____ of God. John 17:13

Discussion Questions

1. Of the things Jesus prayed for in John 17, which do you think are the most important needs at Murray Hill?
2. In what ways are you seeing answered prayer in our church?
3. What are the best ways to pray strategically for the church?
4. What things might happen if Murray Hill UMC reached Its potential?

Appendix D

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHOOL OF PRAYER

ANYBODY CAN PRAY THIS WAY

Brewer 143

"Pray as you can, not as you can't." Don Chapman

Our prayerlessness may grow out of our need to be
_____ before we can pray.

_____ is the most
common form of prayer in the Bible.
Matthew 18:1-5

Biblical examples of "simple prayers":

Moses Complaining! Num.11:11,12

Elisha Cursing! 2 Kings 2:24

Psalmist Asking for Revenge!

Psalms 137:8,9

Jeremiah Accusing God! Jeremiah 20:7

"Lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be
in us." C.S. Lewis

The place to begin praying is _____
_____. Jonah 2:1

We learn to pray by taking our _____
_____ and giving them to God. Luke 12:29-31

There is a principle of _____ in the
spiritual life. Matthew 25:21

_____ is
wanting more of God than can be digested.
Acts 8:14-24

It is wise to strive for _____ prayer
experiences. Matthew 6:5,6

As we pray, we move from thinking about God as
part of our life to the realization that _____ are
part of _____. Romans 8:26,27

GROWING SEEDS OF PRAYER IN YOUR
LIFE

The School of Prayer
Pastor Guy Brewer
October 6, 1999

Brewer 144

Bible Focus: Mark 4: 26-29

Prayer always creates *conversatio morum* or _____
of the _____ in our lives.
Romans 8:29

Prayer is part of a "golden triangle" of ways that
God forms our lives in His image:

1. _____
Phil. 2:12

2. _____ Exod.
34:29

3. _____ James
1:2-4

Prayer involves _____ God and being
_____ by God. Psalm 34:4; Isaiah
64:8

What are ways that you seek God in prayer? How
does God seek after you?

Matthew 14:13 Jesus valued _____ as
a key to growing in God. This is prayer that focuses
more on _____ than striving, _____
_____ more than initiating.

Through the prayer of _____ we come
before God open, flexible, and supple to be shaped by
God. Matthew 12: 18-20.

PRAYING IN THE NAME OF JESUS

The School of Prayer

Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Brewer 145

We can _____ for one another because Jesus is the great High Priest.

"Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them." Hebrews 7:25

Because Jesus has returned to the Father, He has given us a new _____ in our prayer experience.

See: John 16:5-7; Philippians 2:9-11; Romans 8:34

To pray in the Name of Jesus means:

1. To appeal to the _____ as the source of power for our prayers.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus."
I Timothy 2:5

2. To pray in the _____ and the _____ Of Christ.

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you." John 15:7

_____ Is the all-inclusive condition for effective intercession.

An example of "counterfeit" prayer in Jesus' Name:
The 7 sons of Sceva Acts 19:13-17

_____ Means to ask for others with persistence, earnestness, and intensity.

A parable about not giving up in prayer:
Luke 18: 1-8

THE PRAYER OF RELINQUISHMENT

The School of Prayer

Wednesday, October 27, 1999

Brewer 146

Our Bible Focus: Luke 22:39-46

Key verse: "Yet, not my will but Yours be done."

Luke 22:34

Jesus instructs His disciples twice to pray that they might not fall into _____.

About what danger in the spiritual life is Jesus warning His friends at this critical time?

Jesus _____ to obey the will of the Father.

Faith is not _____ or giving up.

The prayer of relinquishment is release of our will with _____.

The _____ of the will is the way God transforms us. Galatians 2:19-20

We learn the prayer of relinquishment through _____ . Matthew 6:33, 34

Spiritual change works more like a _____ of _____ than a tornado in our lives.

Crucifixion always has _____ tied to it.

God crucifies our wills not to destroy but to _____ . John 12:24

God helps us let go our grip on the good so that we might have open hands to receive the _____.

PRAYER OF THE HEART

The School of Prayer

Wednesday, November 2, 1999

Brewer 147

"Teach this simple experience, this prayer of the heart. Don't teach methods; don't teach some lofty way to pray. *Teach the prayer of God's Spirit*, not of man's invention."

Madame Guyon

God longs to _____ us to Himself.
Luke 13:34

Like John Wesley, we need to have our hearts
_____.

Prayer of the heart is claiming that we are
_____. Mt.3:17,
Mt. 17:5, John 15:9

The _____ is praying
with us in our prayer of the heart. Gal. 4:6,
Romans 8:15-16

Spiritual writers speak of three stages of prayer:

Prayer of the _____.

Prayer of the _____.

Prayer of the _____.

Sometimes, we **receive** a prayer from God as a
_____ or personal word. Mt. 4:4,
Ephesians 6:17

The best way to grow in your prayer life is to ask
God to give you an _____ in your heart.
Psalm 42:1,2

Appendix E

SUNDAY WORSHIP MATERIALS

PRAYER AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor Guy Brewer

October 3, 1999

Brewer 149

"God gives where He finds empty hands."

St. Augustine

Prayer creates spiritual _____

to receive the gift of forgiveness.

I John 1:9

At the very heart of the universe is God's
desire to _____ and _____.

Romans 8:26, 27

Lessons from Theophan the Recluse:

Matthew 6:14, 15

What Forgiveness is Not:

1. The end of _____ and _____

. Luke 23:34

2. Forgiving is not _____.

Luke 24:40

3. Forgiving is not _____ It

didn't happen. Acts 2:36-38

What Forgiveness Is:

1. A _____ Of grace where
offense no longer separates.

Colossians 3:13

2. The power of _____ exceeding
the power of the _____.

Romans 5:6-8

3. God's _____. Matthew 6:14

ON A MISSION FROM GOD

Pastor Guy Brewer

October 17, 1999

Brewer 150

Tonight's Theme: Evangelism and Prayer

Key Bible verse: Luke 10:2

**"The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few;
therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out
laborers into His harvest."**

5 Key Principles to Reaching Lost People:

1. God _____ His people to win a lost world.

"... All that Jesus _____ To do and teach."
Acts 1:1

2. _____ Is the first step in
evangelism.

"Pray the Lord of the harvest ..."
Luke 10:2

3. Evangelism is _____.

**"The harvest is plentiful but the laborers
are few."**
Luke 10:2

4. God is responsible for the _____.

"The Lord of the harvest ..." Luke 10:2

5. Motivation for evangelism comes through seeing
with the _____.

**"I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields
that they are white unto harvest." John 4:35**

PRAYING WITH AUTHORITY

Pastor Guy Brewer

October 24, 1999

Brewer 151

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 6:12

Authoritative prayer brings the resources of _____ to bear on a situation on _____.

"Prayer is a mighty instrument not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth." William Law

Jesus' example includes intercession, petitions and _____:

To a demon afflicting a child: Mark 9:14-29

Rebuking the wind and storm: Luke 8:24

Instructing disciples about prayer and faith: Mark 11:23,24

Jesus promises that anyone _____ will have His authority in prayer.
John 14:12

To properly exercise authority in prayer we need: _____ to see what is going on and to know what to do. I Chronicles 12:32

_____ to do all things in love.
Matthew 7:21-23

_____ to speak authoritatively when it is right and good. Proverbs 25:11

HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Pastor Guy Brewer

September 26, 1999

Brewer 152

Today's Bible Focus: Mark 11:11-19

4 Key Ways To Build Up Your Life Through
Prayer:

WAKE UP!

"Jesus entered the temple and began driving out
those who were buying and selling."

Mark 11:15, 17

Prayer creates _____.

LOOK UP!

"Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple.
He looked around at everything, but since it was
already late, He went out to Bethany with the
Twelve." Mark 11:11

Prayer creates _____.

FESS UP!

"You have made it (My house) a den of robbers.
The chief priests and the teachers of the law
heard this and began looking for a way to kill
Him." Mark 11:17, 18

Prayer creates _____.

BUILD UP!

"My house will be called a house of prayer for all
the nations."

Mark 11:17

Prayer is the foundation for _____.

AN ANATOMY OF SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Concert of Prayer

November 7, 1999

Brewer 153

Today's Bible Focus: Ephesians 5:14, Zechariah 8:18-23

**Key verse: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you."
Ephesians 5:14**

Spiritual awakening happens when the Father wakes us up to see _____ in new ways.

Spiritual awakening always involves greater _____ among God's people.

Those who are spiritually awake _____ God in new ways to accomplish God's _____.

4 Hallmark's of Spiritual Awakening through Concerted Prayer:

1. The **awakened attitude** involves _____ and _____.

"Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek His face." Zechariah 8:21

2. The **awakened agenda** focuses on _____ of the Lord. Numbers 22-27

3. The **awakened impact** reaches people _____.
Zechariah 8:23

4. The **ignition of awakening** moves simply from _____ person to another.
Zechariah 8:21, 22

Appendix F

PERSONAL PRAYER COMMITMENT CARD

**MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO
PRAYER**

September 26 - November 7, 1999

Brewer 155

"My house will be called a **house of prayer** for all
the nations."
Mark 11:17

YES, LORD! I want to make prayer a greater
priority in my life.
Over the next 40 days, I will:

- _____ Set aside a daily time for prayer.
- _____ Pray daily for Murray Hill UMC, Pastor Guy,
and his family.

Name: _____
(Please place this half of your prayer commitment
card on the altar or in the collection plate.)

**(Tear here and keep the bottom half to place in
your Bible.)**

**MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO
PRAYER**

September 26 - November 7, 1999

"My house will be called a **house of prayer** for all
the nations."
Mark 11:17

YES, LORD! I want to make prayer a priority in
my life.
Over the next 40 days, I will:

- _____ Set aside a daily time for prayer.
- _____ Pray daily for Murray Hill UMC, Pastor Guy,
and his family.

Appendix G

PRAYER VIGIL OUTLINE

1999 Murray Hill 24 Hour Prayer Vigil

An Intercessor: Job 16:19-21 . . . A witness, an advocate, and a friend who is willing to pray for the needs of others, to pour out tears to God. He is willing to pray . . . pray . . . and pray. Thank you for being an intercessor and standing in the gap for others.

Pray for these things as Paul teaches in Col. 1:10-12:

1. Pray that we know God's will.
2. Pray that we do God's will.
3. Pray that we will have discernment; a change of heart and behavior.
4. Pray for productivity, to bear more fruit.
5. Pray to grow in God's grace, renewing the mind daily.
6. Pray for power through the Holy Spirit (healing, prosperity, renewal, revival).
7. Pray for a right attitude in giving, service, and fellowship.
8. Pray that we will always give thanks to God in all situations.

Partner with our pastor in prayer:

1. To overcome loneliness, stress, and depression.
2. To overcome feelings of inadequacy.
3. Pray for Divine protection in spiritual warfare.
4. Personal needs: servant's heart, wisdom, fruit of the Spirit, health, priority of family and provision..
5. Time alone with God, an anointing, discernment, and spiritual gifts.
6. Pray for a heart for the lost, that he might devote time to personal growth, that he might equip and teach new leaders in the church, that he will hear God's direction.

Partner with our church in prayer:

1. That people will sense the season that God has brought to Murray Hill. Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Ask God for a spirit of worship. Pray for revival of hearts.
2. We will follow the word of God. Pray for spiritual understanding, especially Regarding spiritual gifts. Ask God for obedience in the church.
3. That we would become united in love with Jesus as our first love. Pray for faith to increase, patience to be practiced with humility. Ask God to break down the walls of division, separation, and doubt.
4. That we would be given a vision to follow. Pray that our leaders will have a heart for the lost, the hurting, the needy. Pray that we would look forward instead of backward.
5. That we would experience the joy of the Lord, the peace of the Lord, and the favor of the Lord.
6. Ask God to reveal any roadblocks.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to us.

Appendix H

***METANOIA* FEEDBACK FORM**

METANOIA FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking a moment to give your feedback on ways that God touched you during *Metanoia*, our 40-day season of prayer. We want to continue the great work God has begun in this season, and we want your opinions. Please give your survey to an usher or turn it in at the office.

PLEASE **CIRCLE** THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EXPERIENCE:

1 = VERY LITTLE

2 = SOMEWHAT

3 = MODERATELY SO

4 = QUITE A LOT

5 = VERY MUCH

6 = NOT APPLICABLE

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I enjoyed the Sunday School lessons on prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. I learned how to pray more effectively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. I now have a greater desire to pray. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. I feel more like a partner to my pastor. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. I enjoyed praying with a prayer partner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. I now see prayer as more important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. I want to learn more about prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. I feel closer to God since <i>Metanoia</i> . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. Broken Vessels was a blessing to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. The prayer vigil touched my heart. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. We should have more prayer events. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. I would attend a weekly prayer and praise time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 13. I experienced healing during <i>Metanoia</i> . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14. I received answers to prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 15. I feel closer to my church family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Please include personal testimonies of answered prayer on the back of this sheet. We will publish the results of this survey in the December *RIDER*, including any stories of answered prayer and healing. Please include your name with your testimony if you want your name published with your story.

Your Name and Other Comments:

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